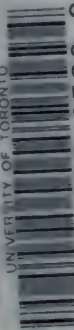


UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO



3 1761 00016520 9

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2009 with funding from
University of Toronto

84

53

23

no Tami

H. Pencil
CORINNA, 1813

OR

ITALY.

BY

MAD. DE STAEL HOLSTEIN.

..... Udrallo il bel paese,
Ch' Apennin parte, e 'l mar circonda; e l' Alpe.

PETRARCH.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR SAMUEL TIPPER,
Leadenhall-street.

1807.

PQ

2431

C713

1807

642197

3-10-56

CORINNA.

BOOK I.

CHAPTER I.

OSWALD.

DURING the winter of the year 1794, Oswald, the descendant of the house of Nelvil, one of the most illustrious families of Scottish nobility, left Edinburgh to repair to Italy. To the graces of a person handsome, tall, and majestic, he added the captivation of a cultivated mind, the advantages of an exalted title, and an independent fortune; but a heavy calamity had injured his health; and it was the unanimous opinion of the faculty

that he should resort to the salubrious climates of the south. Though he was indifferent about the preservation of his life, he obeyed this advice, hoping that a succession of novelties might in some measure dissipate his sorrow. His inmost breast was afflicted by the severest of privations—the loss of a father ; and this original cause of his disorder, when aggravated by painful circumstances, and aided by acute compunctions, left his imagination open to terrific phantoms. The heart softened by dejection is easily persuaded of its own guilt ; and the tranquillity even of the conscience is disturbed by violent agitations of grief.

.At the early age of five-and-twenty he was disgusted with life ; all his actions were governed by the impulse of his mind ; and his sensibility, thus affected, could no longer indulge in the fond illusions of the heart. When he had opportunity of serving his friends, no

one could be more amiably complaisant, or more zealously obliging; but his heart, inaccessible to the gentle tumult of joy, could not be moved even by the satisfaction of having done well. He sacrificed his inclinations to the tastes of others without difficulty; but this absolute renunciation of every selfish end could not be entirely accounted for by referring it to the noble principle of generosity. It arose from the intensity of his suffering, which prevented him from taking any interest in his own immediate destiny. Those who were indifferent to him were pleased with this disposition; but to those who loved him it was painful to observe that he interested himself in the happiness of others without hoping for happiness himself; that he communicated pleasure which they were unable to reciprocate.

His disposition was however changeable; he had a feeling heart and an ardent

mind ; he united every quality that could conciliate others, or gratify himself ; but, accustomed to misfortune and remorse, he became alarmed at futurity, and, in the hope of disarming Fate, determined to expect nothing from her. In the strict observance of every duty, and the abjuration of every pleasure, he hoped to find security against the sufferings that rend the soul ; he considered that the world had no joys which could compensate for its cares, and when the heart is formed for such feelings, how is it possible to prevent their entrance ?

Lord Nelvil hoped that as he had lived in Scotland without pleasure, he should quit it without regret ; but such is not the privilege of feeling hearts. Separation from the dwelling of his father was to him the severest affliction ; for, although it contained apartments which he shuddered to approach, he could not resolve to quit it without more deeply anticipating the miseries of solitude.

The fierceness of his agony appeared to have suddenly dried up his heart, and to have refused the relief of tears; he could now no longer recal those little incidents which melted all his soul; his recollections were faint and indistinct, and were not prompted by the objects which surrounded him; his thoughts were no less concentrated on the dear subject of his regret; but the imperfect semblance of his departed parent mocked the efforts of his feeble imagination. At times he would reproach himself for meditating to abandon the spot once hallowed by the living presence of his father. "May not the shades of the dead," reflected he, "hover over those whom they love? They are perhaps restricted to the spot where their ashes repose, and my father perhaps at this moment bewails our separation without the power of telling me so! Alas! during his life, what other conviction could be produced on his mind by that concurrence of unheard-

of events, than that I had deceived his affection; that I had violated my duty to my country; that I had disregarded his paternal injunction; and that I had outraged every thing sacred upon earth.' Such was the nature of these distressing circumstances that Lord Nelvil was not only unable to entrust them to any other person, but even dreaded to reflect on them himself. How easy for the mind to suffer irreparable injuries by its own reflections!

The dreary solemnity of the ocean adds to the regret so natural on leaving your native country. The mind is overawed by the survey of the watery expanse; the abyss appears to close in upon you, and for ever to intercept your return. In the ocean is seen the image of that infinity which constantly attracts the thoughts, and in which the thoughts are as constantly swallowed up.

Oswald, whose pride and fear restrained him from disclosing even to his friends the secret workings of his breast, preserved his serenity of countenance notwithstanding the inward conflict he endured, and, reclining upon the helm, surveyed the waters with fixed attention; then recalling the days when the tremendous ocean only seemed to afford a worthy occasion for the exercise of his youthful activity, “Why,” exclaimed he, bitterly, “why do I thus constantly surrender myself up to these cruel thoughts? Why thus neglect the pleasures of life—the vigorous exertions which give energy to being? In the midst of such pursuits death itself is an event sometimes glorious, and always divested of the horrors of anticipation. But that death which surprizes us when courage has not courted it; that death by which we are ignobly snatched into the shades of night, which despises our sorrow; which repels the extended

arm of supplication, and inexorably argues the immutable laws of Time and Nature, excites contempt for the human condition, for unavailing lamentation, and for all ineffectual struggles to overcome necessity." Such were the thoughts which tortured Oswald, and it was the peculiar character of his grief to unite the energy of youth with the reflection of age.

He sunk insensibly into the probable thoughts that occupied the last moments of his father, and imaged, with the fervor of youth, the dismal bodings of decrepitude. He was reckless of every thing ; but though his mind no longer invited illusions of happiness, he ceased not to regret their loss. This contrariety, so much in opposition to the ordinary course of nature, in whose disposition is observable the most exact fitness of combination, and in whose gradations is discernible the utmost regularity of transi-

tion, shook the whole soul of the disordered Oswald; yet his outward appearance was affable and unruffled, and his sadness, instead of degenerating into moroseness, had the happy effect of rendering him more amiable and condescending.

During his passage from Harwich to Embden the elements threatened a violent storm; it was then that Lord Nelvil assisted the sailors by his advice, and sustained the passengers by his exhortations; and, when he participated in the labors of the seamen, when he for a moment supplied the pilot's place, he displayed a degree of dexterity and strength which were evidently not the effect of corporal agility only, but shewed that his whole soul was engaged in every action.

At the hour of separation the crew pressed round Oswald to return their

acknowledgments ; they all had to repay, by thanks, favors which he had conferred during the passage, but which he had ceased to remember. First a child, to whom he had paid particular attention, then an old man, whose feeble frame he had supported during the agitation of the vessel, approached and blessed him. Perhaps a similar instance of self abstraction never occurred. During the whole voyage he never appropriated a single moment to himself ; through melancholy and benevolence he was entirely devoted to the service of others. When he retired from the ship the whole of the sailors almost at the same moment exclaimed, “ *My dear Sir, may you be more happy !*” Nevertheless Oswald had not uttered a syllable on the subject of his sorrows, neither had any of the passengers noticed his melancholy, but the lower class of men, who are seldom entrusted with the secrets of their superiors, possess the art of discovering

their feelings by other means, and if you are in affliction they pity you, although they are unacquainted with the cause of your distress, and this spontaneous commiseration is neither mingled with censure nor advice.

CHAPTER II.

WHATEVER the acknowledged advantages of travelling may be, it is certainly one of the most melancholy pleasures of life.—If you are happy in any foreign city, it is because you begin to feel new attachments; but to be thus constantly changing of your place, to be condemned continually to hear a language which you scarcely understand, and perpetually to see faces which can give no pleasure, either by their relation with your recollections or your hopes, is to be secluded from the world without the ease of retirement, and to be detached from society without honorable distinction—for that bustle, that hurry to arrive where no body expects you, and that flutter of curiosity, which you experience, can give birth to no pleasurable sen-

sations, until familiarity has endeared the surrounding objects to the soul.

Lord N. therefore found this habitual melancholy increase as he traversed Germany, on his way to Italy. It was necessary at that time to avoid the vicinity of France, on account of the war, it was also necessary to avoid the route of the armies, since they had rendered the roads impassable. This necessity of informing himself of the details of the journey, and of relinquishing, each day, the route which he had adopted the preceding, was insupportable to Lord Nelvil. His health, far from improving under such fatigues, often obliged him to stop when he was anxious to arrive at the next town, or rather to escape from the present.—The alarming symptom of spitting blood, did not cause him to take care of his lungs ; for he believed himself guilty, and censured himself with unreasonable severity. To defend his country was the only hope

that reconciled him to life. Is not our obligation to our country, reasoned he, in some respects similar to our duty to parents? but of what avail to offer my country this useless existence which I am dragging to a reviving sun, without whose aid I must sink under my oppressions.

Lord N. had expected that the variety of exterior objects would somewhat divert his mind from these habitual reflections, but it was some time before he experienced this happy effect. When the mind has long been alienated by severe calamity, it has to familiarize itself anew with every surrounding object; each effort is a violent shock to the valetudinarian, and nothing multiplies these shocks like travelling.

The only occupation that gave Lord Nelvil any pleasure was to traverse the mountains of Tyrol on a horse he had

brought with him from Scotland ; which galloped with facility over these eminences ; and on this animal he would frequently abandon the high road for the most rugged and dangerous by-paths.

The peasants at first called out in astonishment and fright, when they saw him thus on the verge of the most fearful precipices, but afterwards clapped their hands in commendation of his skill, agility, and courage. Oswald had a pleasure in the emotion arising from danger ; it alleviated the burden of grief, and reconciled him for a moment to a life which he seemed to have rescued, and which he found it so easy to lose.

CHAPTER III.

IN the City of Inspruck near the frontiers of Italy, Oswald heard the story of the Count d' Erfeuil, a French emigrant, from a merchant, at whose house he had resided some time, which raised strong prepossessions in his favor.— This man had supported the loss of a very large fortune, with undisturbed composure, and since that event, had procured his own subsistence as well as that of an aged uncle, by his talent of teaching music. No pecuniary assistance could he be prevailed upon to accept; he had displayed during the war, the most brilliant valour—the valour of a Frenchman; and in the midst of the most violent reverses, his gaiety was uninterrupted.— He was going to Rome to rejoin a relative

whose property would devolve to him, and was desirous of finding a companion, or rather a friend, whose conversation might render the road more agreeable. The most heartrending recollections of Lord Nelvil were connected with France, yet he was free from the prejudices which mutually repel the two nations, because he had enjoyed the intimacy of a Frenchman, and in that friend he had witnessed an assemblage of all the estimable qualities of the heart. He immediately made an offer of his company to conduct this unfortunate young man into Italy, and at the end of an hour the merchant returned to inform him that his proposal was thankfully accepted by the Count d' Erfeuil.

Oswald was much pleased in doing this kindness, but the sacrifice of his solitude was difficult, and his timidity was alarmed at the thought of the constant society of a man, with whom he was totally unacquainted. The Count d' Erfeuil waited

upon Lord Nelvil to thank him. His manners were elegant, his politeness was natural and engaging, and from the first moment of the interview he appeared completely at his ease. It was wonderful to behold him, after the severe trials he had undergone, supporting his misfortunes with a fortitude, that resembled forgetfulness; and he discovered a levity in his conversation, which could not but be admired, when his own feelings were in question, but which certainly appeared less commendable when extended to other topics.

“ I am much indebted to you,” my lord, said the Count d’ Erfeuil, “ for thus rescuing me from this disagreeable place, where I was dying with ennui.”—
“ You are however, much beloved and respected here,” returned Lord N.—“ I have friends here certainly,” rejoined the Count, “ whom I have great reluctance to leave, for I have been treated here with

all possible kindness; but entirely unacquainted as I am with the German language, you will allow that I should find it a very tedious undertaking to acquire it.—Since the misfortune of my uncle's death, I have no settled employment of my time; when I had his company, the care of his old age was a constant exercise for my mind, but now I am at a loss how to dispose of the four-and-twenty hours.”—“Your behaviour toward your helpless relative,” said Lord N. “inspires me with the highest esteem for your character.”—“In that act, my Lord, I was only returning to his old age the favors he had heaped upon my childhood; if he had lived a hundred years, he would have found me always at his side, but he has made a good exchange, and perhaps I should be a gainer by it too, for my expectations from this world are very confined. I did all I could at the war to tempt fate, but since it was my lot to be spared, I must submit and live, as well

as I can.”--“I shall look back with delight on my arrival here,” said Nelvil, “if you can make yourself happy in Rome and if”——“Oh, my lord,” interrupted the vivacious count, “I am happy every where.—Youth and spirits always produce happiness. This philosophy I have neither extracted from books nor from meditation, but from my converse with men, and my acquaintance with adversity; and you see, my lord, that I have something to hope from fortune, since she has procured me the happiness of travelling with you.”—These words were concluded with a most graceful bow, and the hour of setting off being agreed upon, they parted for the present.

Lord N. and the Count accordingly left Inspruck the following day, and Oswald after the customary forms of salutation, remained silent for several hours, but observing that his silence was irksome to his companion, he at length asked him if

he should be gratified by this visit to Italy.—“ Oh,” answered the count, “ I know what to expect in that country, for one of my friends, who buried himself there for six months, assures me that every petty provincial town of France has a finer theatre and more agreeable society than the City of Rome, but in this ancient capital of the world there must be a few of my countrymen to chat with, and this to me is every thing.”—“ You have not been induced then to learn the language.”—“ Why no,” said the count—“ the Italian language did not form a part of my education”—and in saying this he assumed so grave an air that one would have thought the language had been excluded from his studies on serious grounds. “ If I must tell you my undisguised opinion,” continued he, “ I consider no national character, as worthy of esteem, but the English and the French. All others are imitated either from the dignity of the one, or the vivacity of the latter.”—

Oswald remained silent; the Count d' Erfeuil some moments after resumed the discourse, and enlivened it by the most agreeable sallies of wit, and lively comparisons, in which he displayed considerable ingenuity; but his conversation discovered a mind neither enriched by observation nor dignified by sentiment, neither brilliant with fancy, nor solid by reflection, and revolved in eternal monotony round the courtesies of social life.

He repeated twenty names of distinguished persons of England and France, enquiring of Lord N. if he were acquainted with any of them, and took occasion to relate some entertaining anecdotes in a manner peculiarly agreeable, but, to hear him, one would have imagined that the only fit conversation for a man of taste was the frivolous chit-chat of fashionable life. Lord N. reflected deeply on the character of his associate: on that singular union of firmness and frivolity, and on

that contempt of misfortune which would have been so noble if produced by effort, and so heroic if it had not proceeded from the same apathy, which rendered him incapable of lasting attachments.

An Englishman, said Oswald to himself, would sink beneath such an accumulation of misfortunes, whence then is the resolution of this Frenchman derived? And why is he so fickle?—Does the Count d'Erfeuil really understand the true art of living? When I think myself his superior am I wrong? Does his levity of manner better accord with the hurry of life, and instead of devoting the mind to reflection, must it be avoided, as an enemy?

In vain did Oswald strive to satisfy himself on these subjects. No one can transgress the intellectual boundaries which confine him, and the good qualities of the mind are more difficult to subdue than the bad.

The count paid no attention to the beauties of the country they were passing through, and rendered it almost impossible that Lord Nelvil should indulge that disposition which loves to contemplate a beautiful country, and delights in the picturesque views of nature. Whenever the talkativeness of the count permitted him, Oswald turned his attention to the whispers of the breeze, or the murmurings of the sea, for the voice of nature gave him more pleasures than the conversation of society, when held at the foot of the Alps in the midst of ruins and on the shores of the ocean. The melancholy of Oswald was not so great an obstacle to the enjoyment of Italy as the gaiety of Count d' Erfeuil, for the regrets of a sensible mind are easily diverted by the contemplation of nature and the admiration of the fine arts, but frivolity has neither uniformity of attention, originality of thought, nor solidity of sentiment. One of the singular effects which this frivolity

produced, was that it inspired Lord N. with timidity in all his intercourse with the Count d' Erfeuil.

The most serious characters are the most subject to embarrassment, a lively levity keeps in awe a meditative mind, and the happy man appears to be more wise than the sorrowful.

The Count d' Erfeuil was mild, obliging, and complying; he was serious in nothing but self-love, and only worthy of being beloved himself, when he was attached to others; that is to say as an excellent companion of pleasures, and of dangers—but he had no quality by which he could participate in another's sufferings. He grew weary of the melancholy which afflicted Oswald, and would willingly have relieved it as well, on account of the sufferer, as for his own comfort. “What is the grief that rankles in your breast?” exclaimed he often, in impas-

sioned accents. “Are you not young, affluent, and but for your own fault in good health; for, rouse yourself from this unmanly dejection, and you will forget your complaint. As for me, bereft of my fortune, my subsistence, and my hopes, I make myself as happy as though I abounded in all the superfluities of life.”—“Your fortitude,” replied Lord N, “does you great honor, and there are few who can divide this praise with you, but the reverses which you have experienced are less painful than the sorrows of the heart.”—“The sorrows of the heart,” cried the count—“why, certainly, those are the most trying of any.—But—but even they are to be assuaged, for it is surely the duty of a wise man to banish from his mind that which can be serviceable neither to himself nor others. Is it not the primary object of our being, that we should first endeavour the happiness of our fellow creatures, and thus secure our own?

My dear Nelvil, consider this great duty."—

To use the word in its common acceptation, we might say that the expostulations of d'Erfeuil were reasonable enough, for he had what is usually called a good understanding—folly is much more frequently the fault of ardent than of trifling characters, but instead of finding the count endeared to him by such a mode of reasoning, Oswald would gladly have persuaded him that he was the happiest of men, in order to escape the misery of his condolence.

Nevertheless the affections of the count d' Erfeuil were insensibly engaged by Lord Nelvil's amiable resignation and modesty, whilst his dignity and simplicity were altogether irresistible. He was struck with the calm deportment of Oswald, and ransacking his memory for every thing serious he had ever heard

from anxious parents, he exhausted himself ineffectually upon the phlegmatic Englishman; and astonished to find that his apparent coldness was not to be subdued, he inwardly exclaimed—Have I not goodness of heart, sincerity and fortitude? Is not my society agreeable? What then is it that baffles my attempts upon this man? Am I not compelled to suppose that there exists some misunderstanding between us which may have arisen from his not being perfectly acquainted with the French?—

CHAPTER IV.

AN unexpected circumstance very much increased the respect, which the Count d' Erfeuil almost unconsciously felt for his noble companion, who was compelled by fatigue to remain a few days at Ancona. The surrounding heights and the sea, render the situation of this town enchanting; and the concourse of Greeks who are seen at work in the front of the shops, seated in the eastern manner, added to the variety of costume which is seen among the inhabitants of the Levant, produces a novel and interesting effect. Without this distinction of dress, civilization would in appearance, and perhaps in reality, cause all men to resemble each other; but the mind and imagination are pleased by the characteristic distinctions of different nations. Men

are alike only through affectation or design, but variety is affixed to every thing that proceeds from the hand of nature. The costumes of various nations, thus promiscuously assembled, are therefore gratifying, at least, to the sight, and seem to indicate the same diversity of sentiment and feeling.

The modes of worship peculiar to the Greeks, the Catholics, and the Jews, are here practised with perfect harmony. The ritual observances of these several persuasions are widely different, but they are the vehicle of one common sentiment; they join in the same expressions of distress, and the same supplication for mercy.

The catholic church crowns the summit of the mountain which commands the sea, and the murmurings of the waves are heard in unison with the hymns of the priests; the inside is gorgeously

decorated with injudicious ornaments; but it inspires the sublimest sentiments of religion to stand on the portico of this church, and survey that noble ocean, whose surface no man can disfigure by a single mark. The earth is subjected to his industry, and the mountains bear the marks of his superiority; the rivers, in obedience to his command, straighten their streams for his convenience; but no sooner is the placid surface of the sea disfigured by his vessels, than the indignant billows efface the vestige of slavery, and become again fair and unblemished as at their creation.

Lord Nelvil had fixed his departure for Rome for the following morning, when suddenly his ear was assailed by the most frightful outcries; and hastening to learn the cause, he observed that a rapid conflagration had commenced in the harbour, and had already penetrated into the heart of the city; the wind, which

irritated the fierceness of the flames, agitated their reflection in the waves, and broke their bloody image in a thousand forms. The inhabitants, as they were unprovided with engines, were engaged in carrying what assistance they could with their arms; the galley slaves were occupied in saving the town, which to them was a prison, and the loud clank of their fetters was mingled with the cries of the sufferers. The foreigners, who had been drawn to Ancona by the pursuit of commerce, testified their fright by a senseless stare. The merchants, when they beheld their repositories in flames, lost all presence of mind. The fear of losing their property appears to disturb the generality of mankind with no less violence than the dread of dying, and produces an effect, exactly opposite to that enthusiasm which incites to exertion.

The howl of the seamen, always somewhat doleful and lengthened, was made

still more dismal by their alarm. On the banks of the Adriatic, they wear a remarkable red and brown cap; from under these coverings projected the animated countenances of the Italians, on which terror was depicted in every feature. The inhabitants, yielding to despair, threw themselves down on the earth, and concealed their faces, that they might be exempted from beholding the desolation; others rushed into the flames without the least hope of returning. Some appeared to be actuated by a blind fury, and others to be lost in supine despondency; but no where was to be found that coolness, which, in the hour of danger and distress, devises opportunity of escape, and suggests mitigation of calamity.

It occurred to Oswald that there were two English vessels in the harbour, and these vessels always have on board, *engines* in perfect order; he hastened to the

captain, who immediately prepared a boat to convey them to the ships. When the disconsolate sufferers saw themselves deserted, they exclaimed, "You do well, strangers, to leave our unfortunate city." However, "We shall return," said Oswald,—but they did not believe him; he soon shewed himself again, and placed one of the engines opposite a house, near the shore, and the other in the front of a building, in the middle of the street, both of which the flames were fast consuming.—The Count d'Erfeuil ran heedlessly into every danger; the English sailors and the attendants of Lord N. strenuously exerted themselves, the townspeople stood motionless, scarcely comprehending the intent of their actions, and without the least reliance on their success. The bells were tolling in every quarter; the priests were endeavouring to appease the offended divinity by reconciliatory processions; the women prostrated themselves in tears, before some

public images of saints, and vehemently implored their succour ; but no one resorted to the natural means which Heaven has bestowed on man for his defence. But, when these wretches observed the great effect of the exertions of Oswald, when they saw that the flames were subdued, and their houses would be rescued, they passed from astonishment to enthusiasm ; they flocked round him, and embraced him with such eagerness that he was obliged harshly to put a stop to the interruptions, by which there was danger that the orders and the movements necessary for the preservation of the town, might be impeded. Every one had voluntarily placed himself under his command, because, in the most momentous as in the most trivial affairs, no sooner is danger in sight than courage finds its post ; and when men are overcome by fear, they are no longer envious.

At the other extremity of the fire,

Oswald heard the most dolorous shrieks, that penetrated through the universal clamor. He enquired whence they proceeded, and was informed that the officer of the police was accustomed to shut up, every night, the quarter appropriated to the residence of Jews, and these terrified people were in danger of being overtaken by the flames. Oswald shuddered at this thought, and required that the barrier might be instantaneously opened ; but some females of the superstitious populace overhearing this command, conjured him on their knees, not to liberate them, exclaiming, “ It is certainly on account of the Jews, whom we tolerate here, that we are visited with this dreadful destruction ; they are the cause of our calamity, and if you once enlarge them, the whole ocean would never extinguish the fire,” and in this entreaty to let the Jews be burnt, they exerted as much eloquence and mildness, as if they solicited an act of clemency. The cruel-

ty of this wish did not proceed from their natural depravity, but from the weakness of their minds, acted upon by a heavy misfortune. Oswald could scarcely suppress his indignation at these strange intreaties.

He instantly dispatched four English sailors furnished with hatchets to liberate these unhappy wretches, who in an instant dispersed themselves through the town, seeking their property in the midst of the flames with that thirst of gain which appears quite horrible when it produces a contempt of death. One would imagine that man set no value on the simple gift of life.

The fire was now completely got under, except in one house at the top of the town, which was so enveloped in flames, that it appeared impossible to save it, and still more impossible for it to be entered. The inhabitants of Ancona had

CORINNA.

discovered so little interest about its fate, that the English sailors imagined it to be uninhabited, and had therefore withdrawn their engines towards the harbour, and Oswald himself, stunned by the cries of so many people, who vehemently called upon him from all sides, had not observed its danger. The fire had spread more slowly on that side, but had made very alarming advances. Lord N. eagerly asked what place it was they had thus abandoned, and on being told that it was the receptacle for lunatics, this idea shook his very soul, and hastily turning round he discovered that both the sailors and Count d'Erfeuil were gone; he knew that it would be in vain to ask assistance of the townspeople of Ancona, who were now busily employed in saving their goods, and who considered it absurd to expose their lives for the preservation of men who were incurably afflicted with madness. They declared it would be a blessing to them and their families if they

perished thus without occasioning the guilt of any person. Whilst they were thus unfeelingly conversing around Oswald, he was approaching the devoted hospital with great speed, followed by a crowd of people, who, though they condemned his rashness, flocked after him with confused and enthusiastic admiration. When he came near the house he perceived, at the only window which was not concealed by the flames, several patients, who were regarding the progress of the fire with an horrific smile, which bespoke either a total ignorance of all the evils of life, or that excessive anguish of soul which renders death in every shape alike undreaded.

At the sight of these pitiable sufferers, a sudden shivering benumbed all the faculties of Oswald; he recollected that at one period of his despair he had been driven to the verge of mental derangement, and from that time the objects of

that cruel calamity had inspired him with the most tender compassion. He seized a ladder, and placing it against the building, ascended, in defiance of the flames, to the window where all the patients of the hospital were assembled. Overawed by the suddenness of this extraordinary appearance amongst them, they at first suffered themselves to be ordered by Oswald, who perceiving that they were at liberty, except one who was chained in the chamber, the door of which the flames had already reached, but had not as yet burst through the floor, endeavoured to make them use the ladder, which every moment might be snatched away by the flames; the first instantly complied, without opposing a single word; the manner and the countenance of Lord Nelvil had entirely overcome him, but others of them required to be intimidated by threats, without having the power to estimate the danger they themselves were running, or the

increasing difficulty of escape, that their delay occasioned to their benefactor. The people, sensible of the horrors of his perilous situation, implored him to return, and to let the helpless creatures extricate themselves as they were able, but the magnanimous Oswald refused to listen to the voice of safety till he had accomplished the generous enterprize.

Already five of its unfortunate inhabitants had escaped from the hospital, and the only remaining one was in chains. Oswald freed him from his fetters, and urged him to the same means of flight that his fellow sufferers had used; but he was a young man, bereft entirely of his reason, and finding his irons unclasped, after two years of bondage, indulged his immoderate joy by every extravagance of gesture. This joy changed into fury when Oswald wished to force him through the window. At length losing all hope of prevailing on this lunatic to

effect his own escape before the house would be consumed, he took him in his arms, and forcibly carried him off, without knowing whither his steps were tending, and obliged, by the obscurity in which the smoke had involved him, to leap at hazard to the ground; he thus delivered his charge, who continued to resist him, into the hands of the spectators, enjoining them to take every possible care of him.

Oswald, roused by the danger he had run, with his hair floating in all directions, with a countenance at once mild and majestic, inspired the beholding crowd with a zeal that almost amounted to adoration; the females especially expressed their admiration with that fervency of language which is natural to Italian vivacity. They threw themselves at his feet, and could satisfy their gratitude only by invocations of piety. “ You are surely Saint

Michael," exclaimed they, "the protector of our city; expand your wings, but remain with us; ascend to the pinnacles of the church, that we may there behold and adore our deliverer."—"My child is sick," said one, "I beseech you to restore it."—"Inform me, I pray," cried another, "where my husband is, who has been absent from his country many years." While Oswald was considering his escape, the count eagerly ran to him, and said, in clasping his hands, "My dear Nelvil, our friends are entitled to a participation of our pleasures, let me then share in the pleasure of your past dangers."—"Get me from hence," said Oswald, in a low tone. They availed themselves of a moment's darkness, and immediately procured post-horses to convey them out of the city. Lord N. experienced some satisfaction at first from the good action he had just performed; but who could share in these gratifying sensations? His only

friend was no more ! How miserable is the condition of the orphan ! He feels at every occurrence, whether fortunate or disastrous, an aching void in his bosom ; and how shall he ever replace that inborn affection, that concert, that sympathy of the blood, that sacred friendship which heaven itself establishes between the father and his offspring ? He still seems capable of love, but to unbosom his whole soul is a happiness he never can regain.

CHAPTER V.

OSWALD posted through the Marche of Ancona, and the Ecclesiastical State, as far as Rome, without taking any interest in, or scarcely observing the scenes through which he passed. This was to be attributed to the melancholic disposition of his soul, combining with a certain constitutional indolence, from which nought but what affected the strongest passions could arouse him. His fine taste for the arts had not yet unfolded itself. He had hitherto dwelt but in France, where society is every thing, and at London, where political considerations absorb every ether. His imagination, as yet too strongly affected by circumstances, delighted not in the wonders of nature, or in the masterpieces of art.

The Count d'Erfeuil surveyed every town with the *Traveller's Guide* in his hand: he experienced at once the double pleasure of losing his time, in seeing every thing, and of ascertaining that he had seen nothing that could be admired, which was not already known in France. The ennui of the count discouraged Oswald; he felt, besides, a degree of prejudice against the Italians, and against Italy itself. He had not yet penetrated the mysterious character of that nation: a character which is rather comprehended through the imagination, than by those intellectual efforts which are particularly dictated by an English education.

The Italians are more remarkable for that which they have been, and for that which they may be, than for what they really *are*. The deserts which environ ROME---that country, overloaded with the productions of glory, which it seems

to disdain longer to produce---is nought but an uncultivated and neglected plain---because it is no longer considered but as an object of *physical* utility. Oswald, accustomed from his earlier years, entertained, at first, unfavourable impressions on traversing those deserted plains which announced the approach to that city, once the mistress of the world: he censured within himself the indolence of its people, and of their governors. Lord Nelvil contemplated Italy with the eye of an intelligent statesman---the Count d'Erfeuil, as a man of the world: thus one by the stern dictates of reason, the other through levity, experienced not those delightful sensations, that the *Compagna di Roma* produces on that imagination, which is affected by those recollections of departed greatness---by the real beauties of nature---and the consideration of venerable misfortune, which shed over those plains a variety of indescribable charms.

The Count d'Erfeuil made some curious remarks respecting the environs of Rome. "What," said he, "no villa, no inn, nothing to announce the neighbourhood of a great city! In approaching Rome, the postillions exclaim with transport, '*See! see! There is the cupola of St. Peter's!*' The Neapolitans say as much of Vesuvius; and the adjoining sea is even the boast of the inhabitants of its shores. They imagine they see the dome of the Invalids," added the count. This comparison, more patriotic than just, destroyed the impression Oswald would have received from the aspect of this magnificent wonder of human creation. They entered Rome, not during a clear day, not in a fine night, but on a cloudy evening, in hazy weather, which obscured and confounded the surrounding objects. They crossed the Tiber without perceiving it—they entered the city by the "Gate of the People," which leads directly to the *Corso*—the grandest street

in modern Rome, but at the same time it wears the fewest features of originality, as resembling more those in the other cities of Europe.

The streets were crowded—the mountebanks and puppet-shew men exhibited their various devices in the square wherein the column of Anthony rears its head. All the attention of Oswald was captivated with the objects about him. The name of ROME had not yet touched his heart ; he was sensible chiefly to that perfect isolation, so gloomy to the view—when you enter a foreign city—when you behold the multitude of persons to whom your very existence is unknown, and who have no interest in common with you. These reflections, so gloomy to mankind in general, are peculiarly so to the English, who are more accustomed to live among themselves, and who accord with more difficulty to the manners of other people. In the vast *caravansera*

of Rome every one is a stranger ; even the Romans, who seem to inhabit it, do not inhabit it as possessors, *but as weary pilgrims, who repose among the ruins!* (2) Oswald, afflicted by these painful sensations, was inclined to remain in his hotel, and entertained no wish to see the city. He was far from imagining that the country which he had entered with such unfavourable, such gloomy sentiments, would shortly prove the source to him of so many novel and interesting ideas, and such various enjoyments.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER I.-

CORINNA AT THE CAPITOL.

OSWALD awoke for the first time in Rome. A brilliant, an Italian sun met his first view; and his soul was immediately penetrated with sentiments of love and gratitude towards that heaven which contained such a splendid luminary. He was struck with the sound of numerous bells in the various churches of the city. He heard the explosions of cannon in different quarters, announcing some grand approaching ceremony. He enquired respecting the cause, and was informed that Corinna—the most celebrated woman of Italy—as a poetess writer, and com-

poser of extempore rhymes,* and one of the finest women in Rome, was to be crowned that morning at the Capitol. He asked various questions respecting this ceremony, which was consecrated by the names of Petrarch and Tasso, and the answers greatly excited his curiosity.

There is certainly nothing more foreign from the sentiments and habitudes of the English nation, than the act of celebrating by grand public ceremonies, the destiny of a woman; but the enthusiasm with which the Italians are inspired by the talent, by the power of imagination, attracts, momentarily at least, the affection and regard of foreigners; and they forget even the prejudices of their respective countries, in the bosom of a nation, so ardent in the expression of those sentiments it feels. The inhabitants of Rome understand the fine and liberal arts, they

* The *improvvisatore*, or art of composing extemporary verses, is an accomplishment peculiar to the Italians.

comment, with taste and science, on the statues, the pictures, the monuments, the antiquities, and the literary productions of their country—feeling, at the same time, a certain degree of national interest therein.

Oswald immediately quitted his hotel: in the public streets he heard every one speak in raptures of Corinna, of her talents, and her genius. The streets through which she was to pass were distinguished by particular decorations. The multitude, who rarely assemble but to gaze on the minions of fortune or of power, here flocked in crowds to behold her, whose sole distinction was the transcendent gift of genius. In the present state of Italy, its inhabitants possess no means of arriving at celebrity, but through the medium of the fine arts, they are therefore susceptible of the inspirations of genius, with respect to these, in a peculiar degree, which would produce a number of great men, were applause sufficient o

support them ; if freedom of action, a strong interest in its results, and an independent being, were not necessary to support and to encourage genius.

Oswald walked about the streets of Rome impatient for the arrival of Corinna. At every moment he heard her name mentioned ; he heard a new encomium ; in the whole, a combination of all those talents which captivate the imagination.—One said that her voice was the most affecting in Italy—another, that she excelled every one in tragic acting—a third, that she danced as a very nymph—a fourth, that her drawings exhibited equal originality and grace. Several asserted that no one had ever written or spoken extemporally* such exquisite poetry, and that in her ordinary conversation she displayed so graceful, so captivating an eloquence, as fascinated all her hearers. Some disputed among themselves which of the Italian ci-

* In the French *improvisé*, from the Italian verb *improvvisare*, to compose or sing extemporary verses.

ties had the honour of giving her birth; but the Romans warmly contended that she must be a native of Rome, or she could not speak the Italian language with such elegance and purity. The name of her family was unknown. Her first production had appeared about five years before, the name of the authoress was stated solely as "CORINNA." No one knew where she resided, nor where she had been before that period; she was now nearly twenty-six years of age. This mysteriousness combined with publicity; this woman of whom all the world spoke, and whose real name no one knew, appeared to Lord Nelvil as one of the wonders of that singular country he had travelled to see. He would have thought of such a woman very harshly in England, but with respect to Italy he entertained very different ideas, and the crowning of CORINNA interested him rather as an adventure in ARIOSTO would have done.

A fine but impressive species of music preceded the triumphal procession. That which is announced or accompanied by music, whatever it be, is always more or less interesting. A great number of the Roman nobility, and several foreigners of distinction, proceeded before the car of Corinna.—“ *This is the train of enthusiastic admirers,*” said one Roman. “ Yes !” answered another, “ she receives the praise of all the world, but, on her part, she grants a decided preference to no one ; she is rich, independent. It is really thought so, and surely she possesses the dignified air of a woman of illustrious birth : but who wishes to be unknown.” “ Bet hat as it may,” observes a third, “ she is a divinity environned by clouds !” Oswald fixed his eye upon the man who thus expressed himself ; he appeared one of the lowest order ; but in southern regions, such poetical expressions proceed so naturally, that it may almost be said they

are elevated into the empyrean, and inspired by the sun itself.

At length the car in which Corinna was seated, drawn by four white horses, approached—the vehicle was formed upon a truly classic model; and young virgins arrayed in white, walked by the side of it. In every street through which it passed, they filled the air with incense and perfumes. Every soul ran to the windows to behold the procession; the windows were profusely decorated with flowers, and with scarlet tapestry. The universal exclamations were “Long live Corinna!” —“Let genius flourish—success to beauty!” The impulse was general, yet Lord Nelvil did not participate in it—it may truly be said, he was predetermined—he judged the whole through the medium of English reserve and French levity—he interested himself not in the ceremony!—but at length he perceived Corinna.

She was habited as a *Sybille du Dominiquin*, a fine India shawl was entwined around her head, and her hair of the most brilliant black, accompanied its folds ; her robe was white—a fine blue sash was twisted round, just below her bosom; her costume was striking and picturesque without, at the same time departing so far from the immediate fashion, as to warrant the least charge of affectation on her part. Her attitude on the car was at once dignified and chastened : it was perceptible she was pleased with admiration, but an obvious feeling of timidity was blended with her satisfaction, and this seemed to increase the interest of her triumph. The expression of her countenance—her eyes—her placid smile, affected every one, the first glance made Lord Nelvil her friend, before even a deeper impression could subdue him. Her arms were beautifully formed, her shape majestic ; but rather inclining to fullness—the general air that of a Grecian

statue, strongly expressive of youth and happiness. Her whole countenance wore somewhat the air of inspiration. In her mode of expressing her grateful feelings for the thousand plaudits she received, you may perceive a sort of unaffected simplicity which chastened the eclat of the brilliant situation in which she was placed. She reminded you at once of a priestess of Apollo, entering the temple of the sun, and of a female enured to the utmost simplicity of life; in fine all her motions, and her appearance possessed a charm which at once excited interest and curiosity—astonishment and affection.

The expressions of popular admiration increased the nearer she approached the Capitol, that spot so pregnant with interesting recollections. The clear and brilliant sky, the enthusiastic Roman populace, and, above all, Corinna herself, electrified the imagination of Oswald. He had often beheld in his own country,

public characters carried in triumph by the people, but this was the first time he had seen public honours bestowed on a *female*, a woman rendered illustrious solely by her genius. *Her* car of triumph excited the tears of no one; no regrets, no fears, accompanied her progress, nor impeded the homage paid to the finest gifts of nature—imagination, sentiment, and reflexion.

Oswald was so absorbed in thought—filled with novel ideas and emotions, that he regarded not the antient and celebrated scenes through which the car of Corinna advanced. At the foot of the steps which lead up to the entrance of the Capitol, the car halted—and in a moment troops of Corinna's friends pushed forward, each endeavouring to hand her out. She preferred the assistance of the Prince of Castel-Forte, the most esteemed of the Roman nobility for his talents and his character. Every one approved Corinna's selection;

they ascended the steps of the Capitol, the imposing majesty of which seemed to receive with great satisfaction, the graceful and fascinating advances of a female. The musicians transcended their former efforts, and loudly announced the arrival of Corinna, the artillery resounded, and the triumphant *Sybille* entered a palace worthy her reception.

At the bottom of the hall, in which she was received, was placed the senator appointed to crown her; he was attended by the other members of that august body. On one side, were seated the cardinals, and the most distinguished ladies of the country; on the other, were seen the literary characters of the Roman academy. The farther end of the hall was occupied by a part of the immense crowd which had followed Corinna; the seat allotted to her, was one degree below that of a senator; Corinna, before she took her seat, in the presence of that august assem-

bly, was, according to the etiquette, to kneel upon the first step. This she performed with such an air of modest dignity, so interesting, so unaffected, that Lord Nelvil was at the moment so touched with sympathetic enthusiasm, as even to suffuse his eyes with tears ! he was astonished at the involuntary affection ; but in the midst of all this splendour, this successful celebrity, Corinna appeared to him, to solicit, by the expression of her countenance, the kind, the sympathetic protection of a friend. A species of protection, which a female, whatever her rank may be, naturally demands ; and he felt how grateful it would be, were he the protector of her, whose sensibility alone rendered an external protection necessary.

As soon as Corinna had taken her seat, the Roman laureats commenced the delivery of the sonnets and the odes they had addressed to her. They praised her

to the skies, but these praises characterised her not far beyond what has been said of other women of great and superior genius—they consisted of a fascinating assemblage of imagery and allusions to the antient mythology. Such as, from age to age, since the epoch of SAPPHO, have been applied to women, rendered illustrious by their literary talents.

Already Lord Nelvil sympathised in these praises of Corinna; it even struck him that beholding her, at the moment, he could himself have drawn a portrait more just, more minute, in short, such a portrait as could correspond with no one, save Corinna herself.

CHAPTER II.

THE prince of Castel-Forte rose to reply to those eulogies, and what he said respecting Corinna, drew the attention of the whole assembly. His highness was about fifty years of age—his delivery was correct and dignified—his age, and the assurance given to Count d'Erfeuil, that the prince was merely the *friend* of Corinna, induced him to take an unalloyed pleasure in the praises bestowed by his highness. Oswald, who was not so assured, began to feel some internal sensations, not unlike those of jealousy.

The prince recited several pages in prose, not directly adverting to, but sufficiently resembling, to shew the auditor the character of Corinna was in contem-

plation. He expatiated, at first upon the peculiar merit of her productions—he said this merit, in some degree, resulted from her extensive knowledge of foreign literature. He noticed her competency to unite with the highest degree of imagination, the vivid and brilliant descriptions of the southern writers, but this portrayed knowledge of the human heart, as suited to different climes and regions, seemed rather to weaken the interest of the production.

He applauded the grace and gaiety of Corinna, a gaiety which approached not to unseemly ridicule—but resulted solely from that vivacity of spirit, the offspring of an exuberant imagination. He attempted to panegyrisce her sensibility—but it could easily be perceived that some personal feelings of regret were blended with this part of his discourse. He lamented the difficulty of meeting in human existence, a female

corresponding with an object which perhaps is but ideal, in whom is combined every thing which the heart or genius could desire. He seemed to delight however in portraying that impassioned sensibility which breathed through all the poetry of Corinna, and that exquisite art which she possessed of displaying these delicate, these affecting relations which exist between the beauties of nature, and the deepest emotions of the soul. He extolled the originality and the correctness of her expressions, expressions which naturally proceeded from these characters which she drew, and the degrees of feeling and sentiment with which she endowed them, without, at the same time, the least shadow of affectation, tending to diminish a species of grace and beauty, which not only naturally, but involuntarily charmed.

Of her eloquence he spake in strains of

eulogy ; he depicted it as possessing irresistible force, which operated the more powerfully upon its auditors, in proportion as those possessed the gifts of genuine sensibility.—“ Corinna,” said he, “ is without doubt the most celebrated woman of our country, notwithstanding, she is known to her friends alone, for the exalted faculties of the soul, when they are genuine, stand in need of illustration, to render them generally comprehensible. The eclat of publicity, as well as the shade of obscurity, prevents their being thoroughly understood, a degree of sympathy, resulting chiefly from circumstances, is necessary for elucidation.” He expatiated on her talent for extempore effusions, a talent which resembled, in nothing, the improvisatorè, as so expressed in Italy. “ It is not alone,” continued he, “ to the exuberance of her genius, that this is to be attributed, but to those fine emotions of her soul, which give

birth to the most generous sentiments, she cannot pronounce a word in that strain and character, without betraying the real and inexhaustible source, whence these sentiments and ideas are derived, for, they are neither animated, nor inspired by enthusiasm." His highness also successfully dwelt on the charms of her style, always pure, always harmonious.—"The poetry of Corinna," added he, "is an intellectual melody, which alone can adequately express the charms of impressions, in the last degree transient, delicate, and refined."

He then panegyrised the ordinary conversation of Corinna. It was perceptible that he had tasted of its delights: "Imagination and simplicity, justness and exaltation of thought, the energetic, and the amiable all unite," said he, "in the same person, to vary every instant the extatic pleasures of those who converse

with her. To her, in this respect, may well be applied, this charming line of PETRARCH :

“ Il parlar che nell’ anima si sente.”*

She really possesses much of this superior grace, of that oriental charm which the antients attributed to CLEOPATRA.

“ The places I have visited in her company,” added the Prince of Castel-Forte, “ the music we have heard in each other’s company, the pictures she has shewn me, and the books we have read together, have filled my imagination. There is in all these objects a spark of her life. “ Yes,” he continued (and at this moment his eyes fell by chance upon Oswald) “ look at Corinna if you can pass your life with her, if your can secure yourself for a long time, that double existence she will give you ; but do not look at her, if you must at any time leave her ; you will

* The language felt at the bottom of the soul.

search in vain, so long as you live, for that creative soul which shares and multiplies your sentiments, and your thoughts, but never will you recover her."

Oswald started at these words ; his eyes were fixed upon Corinna, who watched them with an emotion which self-love did not produce, but which belonged to sentiments more amiable and tender. The Prince of Castel-Forte resumed his discourse, which a momentary burst of tenderness had suspended ; he spoke of Corinna's talents for painting, for music, for declamation, for dancing ; he said that in all these talents it was always Corinna alone whom we saw ; she never confined herself to any particular manner, or to any general rule, but expressed in varied languages the same power of imagination, the same enchantment of the fine arts, under their various forms.

" I do not flatter myself," said the Prince

of Castle-Forte, when concluding, “that I have been able to paint a person of whom it is impossible to form an idea, when we have not seen her ; but her presence with us in Rome may be regarded as one of the benefits of our brilliant climate, and of our inspired nature. Corinna is the bond by which her friends are united together ; she is the movement, the interest of our life ; we are dependent upon her goodness ; we are proud of her genius ; we say to strangers:—look at her ; she is the image of our beautiful Italy ; it is to her we owe freedom from that ignorance, that envy, that discord and indolence, to which our lot has condemned us ; we are pleased in contemplating her as an admirable production of our climate, of our fine arts, as a reflection of the past, as an earnest of the future ; and when foreigners insult this country which has sent out those lights which have illuminated Europe ; when they refuse to pity our faults which arise from our misfortunes,

we may say to them, look at Corinna ;— yes, we shall follow her traces, we shall become as great as men as she is as a woman, if men could, like women, create a world in their own hearts, and if our genius, necessarily dependant upon social relations, and external circumstance, might be illuminated entirely at the lamp of poetry alone.”

When the Prince Castel-Forte ceased speaking, unanimous applauses resounded from all quarters ; and although there was in the end of his discourse, an indirect aspersion upon the present state of the Italians, all the great men present approved of it, so true it is that we find in Italy that sort of liberality which does not induce them to change institutions, but to pardon in higher minds, a tranquil opposition to existing prejudices.

The Prince of Castel-Forte was a great man at Rome ; he spoke with a rare sa-

gacity; and this was a remarkable gift in a country, where there is much more genius in their conduct than in their discourse. In business it is not activity which distinguishes the Italians; but they are pleased when studying, and do not shrink from the fatigue of meditation. The happy inhabitants of the south sometimes shun this fatigue, and flatter themselves that they can divine all by their imagination, in the same manner as their fertile country produces fruits without culture, simply by the assistance of a favorable climate.

CHAPTER III.

CORINNA rose when the Prince of Castel-Forte had ceased ; she thanked him by an inclination of her head so graceful and noble, that it displayed at once both the modesty and the joy, so extremely natural, of having been praised according to one's own taste. It was customary for a poetess, when crowned in the Capitol, to recite extempore a piece of verse before they placed upon her head the laurels intended for her. Corinna desired her lyre to be brought the instrument of her choice, and which considerably resembled the harp, but was more antique in its form, and simpler in its tones. On assuming it she was at first seized with a great sentiment of timidity ; and it was with a trembling voice

she asked the subject which was imposed upon her—*The glory and happiness of Italy!* was unanimously answered by all around her—yes, she replied, already inspired and encouraged by her genius, “*The glory and happiness of Italy!*” and feeling herself animated by the love of her country, she acquitted herself in verses full of beauty, and of which prose can give but an imperfect idea.—

EXTEMPORE EFFUSION OF CORINNA
IN THE CAPITOL.

“Italy, empire of the sun; Italy, mistress of the world; Italy, nursery of learning; I salute thee! How often has the human race been subjected under thee! tributary to thy arms, thy fine arts, and thy climate!

“A deity quitted Olympus to take refuge in Ausonia; the aspect of this country recalls the golden age, and man appears too happy to suppose him guilty.

“Rome conquered the universe by her genius, and was made a queen by liberty. The Roman character is imposed upon the world; and the invasion of the barbarians by destroying Italy, darkened the whole universe.

“Italy re-appeared with the divine treasures which the fugitive Greeks brought into her bosom; the Heavens revealed to her their laws; the boldness of her children discovered a new hemisphere! she was also a queen by means of the sceptre of profound learning, but the sceptre of the muses always produces rebels!

“Imagination restores to her the universe she has lost. Her painters and her poets have created for her a territory, an Olympus, heavens, and infernal regions; and the fire which animates her, better guarded by her genius than by the god of the Pagans, has not found in Europe a Prometheus to ravish it.

“Why am I in the Capitol? Why does my humble forehead receive the crown which Petrarch wore, and which remains suspended upon the funeral cyprus of Tasso? would it be so, my fellow countrymen, if you did not love glory so much, as to recompense its worshippers, as well as its successes?

“If you love that glory then, which chuses too often its victims among the conquerors it has crowned, reflect with pride upon those ages which saw the regeneration of the arts. Dante, the Homer of our modern times, a poet sacred by our religious mysteries, the hero of thought, plunged his genius into Styx in order to reach the infernal regions, and his soul was as profound as the abysses he describes.

“Italy, in the days of her strength, revived entirely in Dante. Animated by the spirit of republics, a warrior as well

as a poet, he kindles the flame of actions among the dead; and even his shades have a more prominent life than the living here below.

“ The remembrances of the earth still pursue them; their passions, without an object, are exasperated against their own hearts; they are distracted on account of the past, which seems to them still less irrevocable than their eternal futurity.

“ It may be said, that Dante, banished from his country, carried into imaginary regions the sorrows which devoured him. His shades incessantly demand news from this world, like the poet himself, who continually wishes to be informed as to his country; and hell itself is presented to his eyes in the colors of exile.

“ Every thing in his eyes is clothed in the costume of Florence. The ancient dead he invokes appear like Tuscans, as

well as himself; this is not to be attributed to the limited nature of his genius, but to the strength of his soul, which brings the whole world within the circle of his thought.

“A mystical chain of circles and spheres conducted him from the infernal regions to purgatory, and from purgatory to Paradise; in the faithful history of his vision, he inundates with lustre the darkest regions, and the world he creates in his triple poem is complete, animated, brilliant, like a new planet perceived in the firmament.

“At his voice the whole earth is changed into poetry; objects, ideas, laws, and phenomena, seem to be a new Olympus of new divinities; but this mythology of the imagination is annihilated, like paganism at the sight of paradise, and of that ocean of light, sparkling with radiance and stars—with virtues and with love!

“ The magic words of this our grandest poet is the prism of the universe, all its wonders are thereby reflected, divided, and recomposed ; the sounds imitate the colours, the colours are melted into harmony ; rhyme, sonorous or complicated, rapid or lengthened, is inspired by that poetical divination, the supreme beauty of the art and the triumph of genius which discovers in nature all the secrets in relation with the heart of man.

“ Dante hoped that his poem would put an end to his exile ; he relied upon its renown as a mediator ; but he died too soon to reap the palms from his country. For often is the fleeting life of man passed in misery and sorrow ; and if glory triumphs, if we alight at last upon a more fortunate region, the soul opens behind the gates, and fate in a thousand forms, often announces the end of life by the return of good fortune.

“ Thus Tasso, that unfortunate ge-

nins, whom your homages, Romans, should have consoled for the many injustices he suffered, handsome, full of sensibility, chivalric, dreaming of exploits, experiencing that love which he sung, approached these walls, like his heroes from Jerusalem, with respect and gratitude. But in the dismal evening of his life he was crowned, and death reclaimed him for his terrible banquet. Heaven is jealous of the earth, and recalls its favourites from the deceitful regions of time."

"In a bolder and freer age than that of Tasso, Petrarch was also like Dante, the valourous poet of Italian independence. In other countries he is known only for his loves; here more serious recollections will ever do honor to his name, and his country inspired him better than Laura herself.

"He reanimated antiquity by his la-

bors, and far from his imagination being an obstacle to the profoundest studies, this creative power, by submitting futurity to the controul of his genius, revealed to him the secrets of the passed ages. He experienced that to be learned was better than to invent, and his genius was so much the more original that similar to eternal powers it knew how to be present at every era.

“ Our serene sky and smiling climate inspired Ariosto. He was the rain bow which appeared after our long wars ; brilliant and variegated like this messenger of serene weather, he seems to sport familiarly with life ; and his easy and gentle gaiety is the smile of Nature, and not the irony of man.

“ Michael Angelo, Raphael, Pergolesi, Galileo, and your intrepid travellers, anxious to explore new regions, although Nature can never present a finer country

than your own! vie also with your poets in contributing to your glory. Artists, wits, philosophers, like them, ye are children of that sun, which, by turns, develops imagination, concentrates ideas, excites courage, and sets amid happiness, seeming to promise or to forget every thing.

“ Are ye acquainted with that country, where the orange-trees flourish, fecundated with love by the rays of heaven? Have ye heard the melodious sounds which celebrate the mildness of the nights? Have ye breathed these perfumes, and that luxuriant air already so pure and mild? Answer, foreigners, is Nature among you so beautiful and bounteous?

“ In other countries, when social calamities afflict them, the people think themselves abandoned by the Divinity; but here we feel always the protection of

Heaven; we see that it is interested in the happiness of man; and that it has condescended to treat him like a noble creature.

“ It is not with wines and with spices alone that Nature has decorated our soil, but she has lavished under the feet of mankind, as at the banquet of a sovereign, an abundance of flowers, and plants; which, destined to please only, are not debased by servile uses.

“ The delicate pleasures produced by Nature, are enjoyed by a nation worthy of feeling them; the most simple viands are sufficient; its inhabitants do not intoxicate themselves at the fountains of wine, which abundance prepares for them: they love their soil, their fine arts, their monuments, and their country, at once antique and yet in its infancy; the refined enjoyments of a brilliant society, and not the coarse pleasures of a covetous people, were made for them.

“ Here sensations are confounded with ideas; life drinks entirely from the same source; and the soul, like the atmosphere, fills up the space between the earth and heaven. Here genius feels herself at ease, because the reveries of her votaries are mild; if the former is agitated, the latter tranquillize her; if she regrets the want of a subject, here she may be presented with a thousand chimeras; if men oppress her, Nature is here ready to receive her!

“ Thus Nature here always improves; and her auxiliary hand is held out to cure every wound. Here we may be consoled even for the sorrows of the heart, by admiring a God of goodness, by penetrating the secret of his love, not in our fleeting days, the mysterious precursors of eternity, but in the fruitful and majestic womb of the immortal universe!”

Corinna was now interrupted for some

seconds by the most impetuous applause. Oswald alone did not mingle in the noisy transports displayed around him. He had leaned his head upon his hand when Corinna said, *Here we may be consoled even for the sorrows of the heart*; and from that moment he had never raised it. Corinna remarked him; and, from his countenance, the color of his hair, his dress, his tall figure, and, in short, from all his manners, she recognized him to be an Englishman. The suit of mourning he wore, and his physiognomy, full of sadness, struck her. His look, now fixed upon her, seemed gently to reproach her: she guessed the thoughts which occupied him, and she felt the necessity of satisfying him, by speaking of happiness with less assurance, and by consecrating some verses to Death in the midst of a festival. She therefore resumed her lyre for this purpose; and imposing silence upon the whole assembly, by the melting and lengthened tones which she

drew from her instrument, she thus began :

“ There are sorrows, however, which our consoling climate cannot efface; but in what spot can a gentler and nobler impression be made upon a troubled mind, than in these happy regions ?

“ In other countries, mortals scarcely find room enough for their rapid courses, and their ardent desires; here, ruins, deserts, and inhabited palaces, leave a vast space for departed spirits. Rome, however, is not a country of tombs !

“ The Colisæum, the obelisks, and all the wonders which, from the heart of Egypt and of Greece, from the extremity of ages, from Romulus to Leo the Tenth, are collected here, as if grandeur attracted grandeur, and as if one place ought to contain every thing that mankind wishes to put beyond the reach of

time ; all these wonders are consecrated to funeral monuments. The indolent life of us, moderns is scarcely perceived ; the silence of the living is an homage to the dead ;—they remain, while we pass away.

“ These alone are still honored, these alone are still celebrated ; our obscure destinies serve as a foil to the lustre of our ancestors ; our present existence is not so prominent as the past. All our chefs-d’œuvre are the works of those who are no more ; and genius itself is ranked among the illustrious dead.

“ Perhaps one of the secret charms of Rome is to conciliate the imagination by a long dream. We are here resigned, in so far as respects ourselves ; and we suffer less for those we love. The inhabitants of the South figure the end of life to themselves, in colors less dismal than the inhabitants of the North. The sun, like glory, relumes even the tomb !

“ The chilling damp and separation of the tomb, under this fine sky, and by the side of so many funeral urns, pursue weak minds with much less horror. We think ourselves attended by a host of departed spirits; and, from our solitary city to the sepulchral vault, the transition seems easy and gentle.

“ Thus the edge of sorrow is blunted, not because the heart is vain-glorious, not because the soul is frigid, but a more perfect harmony, a more odoriferous atmosphere, mingle with existence. We abandon ourselves to Nature with less fear—to that sovereign Nature of whom the Creator hath said, ‘ The lilies toil not, nor spin, and nevertheless, what royal vesture can equal the magnificence with which I have clothed these flowers!’ ”

Oswald was so enraptured by these last strophes, that he expressed his admiration in the most energetic manner; and

on this occasion, the transports of the Italians themselves did not equal those of Oswald. In fact, it was to him more than to the Romans, that this second effusion of Corinna was addressed.

The most of the Italians, in reading verses, make use of a monotonous drawl, denominated *Cantilena*, which destroys every emotion.(3) It is in vain that the words are varied; the impression remains the same, since the accent, which is still more necessary than the words, does not change at all. But Corinna recited with a variety in her tones, which did not destroy the charm of the harmony; her performance resembled different airs, all played by a celestial instrument.

The melting and exquisite tone of Corinna's voice in pronouncing the Italian language, so pompous and sonorous, produced upon Oswald an impression completely new. English prosody is uniform;

its natural beauties are all melancholy ; the clouds have formed its colors, and the noise of the billows its modulation : but when these Italian words, brilliant like a day of festival, resounding like the instruments of victory, which have been compared to scarlet among the colors ; when these words, impressed also with the joyous sentiments which a beautiful climate spreads through every heart, are pronounced by a feeling voice, their lustre softened, their fire concentrated, they occasion a feeling as lively as unforeseen. The intention of Nature seems to be deceived, her benefits useless, her offers rejected ; and the expression of pain in the midst of so many enjoyments astonishes, and touches more profusely than grief described in the languages of the North, which seems inspired by Nature herself.

CHAPTER IV.

THE Senator took the crown of myrtle and laurel to be placed upon the head of Corinna. She took off the shawl which hung over her forehead, and all her hair, as black as ebony, fell in ringlets upon her shoulders. She inclined her head forward, her looks being animated by a sentiment of pleasure and gratitude, which she did not endeavour to dissemble. She threw herself a second time on her knees to receive the crown, but she appeared less troubled and less agitated than on the first occasion; she spoke; she filled her soul with the noblest sentiments; enthusiasm triumphed over her timidity. It was no longer a fearful woman, but an inspired priestess, who joyfully consecrated herself to the worship of genius.

When the crown was placed upon her head, all the instruments sounded and played those triumphant airs, which exalt the soul in a manner so powerful and so sublime. The noise of the drums and cymbals moved Corinna again; her eyes were filled with tears; she sat down for a moment, and covered her face with her handkerchief. Oswald, sensibly affected, left the crowd, and advanced some paces in order to speak to her; but an invincible embarrassment withheld him. Corinna looked at him some time, taking care, nevertheless, that he might not see her paying any attention to him; but when the Prince Castel-Forte took her hand in order to accompany her from the Capitol to her chariot, she allowed them to escort her with reluctance; and turned her head several times, under various pretences, in order to look at Oswald.

He followed her; and at the moment

she descended the stair-case, accompanied by her protector, she turned back once more: this movement threw down her crown. Oswald hastened to take it up; and, on returning it to her, uttered some words in Italian, signifying, that humble mortals placed at the feet of the Gods, the crown which they durst not place upon their heads.(4) Corinna thanked Lord Nelvil in English, with that purely natural accent, that accent purely insular, which can never be imitated upon the continent. How great was the astonishment of Oswald when hearing her! At first he stood immovable in his place; and feeling himself agitated, he rested himself upon one of the basaltic lions, which are at the bottom of the stair-case of the Capitol. Corinna looked at him again, sensibly struck at his emotion; but she was conducted to her car, and the crowd disappeared a long time before Oswald had recovered his strength and presence of mind.

Corinna had hitherto enchanted him as the most charming of all foreigners, as one of the wonders of the country through which he travelled; but that English accent recalled to him all the recollections of his country,—that accent naturalized in his mind all the charms of Corinna. Was she an Englishwoman?—Had she spent several years of her life in England? He could not guess: but it was impossible that study alone should have taught her to speak so correctly; Corinna and Lord Nelvil must, in short, have lived in the same country. Who knew but that their families might be related to each other? Perhaps even he might have seen her in his infancy! We have always in our hearts a confused species of innate image of those we love, which may persuade us, that we have recognized the beloved object the first time we meet.

Oswald was strongly prejudiced

against the Italians; he thought them ardent, but fickle, and incapable of feeling profound and lasting attachments. Already what Corinna had said in the Capitol, had inspired him with a different idea; what must it be then if he could thus, at once, recover the recollections of his country, and receive, by the imagination, a new life; and to be thus re-animated for the future, without quarrelling with the past?

In the midst of these reveries, Oswald found himself upon the Bridge of St. Angelo, which leads to the castle of the same name, or rather to the tomb of Adrian, which has been converted into a fortress. The silence of the place, the pale waves of the 'Tiber, the rays of the moon, which threw a light upon the statues placed upon the bridge, and rendered these statues like white ghosts looking stedfastly down upon the waves, and upon time, which no longer concerned

them; all these objects recalled him to his habitual ideas. He laid his hand upon his heart, and felt the portrait of his father, which he always carried; he took it up to look at it, and the moment of happiness he experienced, and the cause of this happiness, recalled to him but too much that sentiment which had already rendered him so culpable towards his father; this reflection renewed his remorse.

“Eternal remembrance of my life,” he exclaimed, “my friend so much offended, and yet so generous! Could I have thought that the emotions of pleasure could find access to my soul so soon? It is not thou, the best and most indulgent of men, it is not thou who reproachest me; thou wilt that I should be happy, and thou wilt so in spite of my faults; but must I also despise thy voice when thou speakest from heaven, as well as I despised it on earth!”

BOOK III.

CORINNA.

CHAPTER I.

THE Count d'Erfeuil had been present at the festival in the Capitol, and he called upon Lord Nelvil the next day:—"My dear Oswald," said he, "shall I take you with me this evening to Corinna's!"—"How," said Lord Nelvil, interrupting him sharply, "do you know her?"—"No," answered the Count d'Erfeuil, "but a person so celebrated is always flattered when people are desirous of seeing her; and I have written to her this morning, to ask her permis-

sion to wait upon her this evening along with you.”—“ I could certainly have wished,” answered Oswald, coloring up, “ that you had not thus mentioned me without my consent.”—“ You ought to thank me,” replied the Count, “ for having spared you some tedious formalities: in place of going to an ambassador, who would have carried you to a cardinal, who would have referred you to a woman, who would have introduced you to Corinna, I shall present you—you shall present me—and both of us will be very well received.”—

“ I have less confidence than you, and certainly with good reason,” replied Lord Nelvil; “ I dread, lest this precipitate request may have displeased Corinna.”—

“ Not at all I assure you,” said the Count d’Erfeuil, “ she has too much spirit for that, and her answer is very

polite.”—“How did she answer you,” replied Lord Nelvil, “and what did you say to her, my dear Count?”—“Ah, my dear Lord,” said D’Erfeuil, laughing; “you will be melted when you hear that Corinna answered me with, *I love you, and all is forgiven*. I shall, therefore, modestly confess to you, that in my billet I said more for myself than for you; and that in her answer, it seems to me that she names you first; but I am never jealous of my friends.”—“Certainly,” answered Lord Nelvil, “I do think that neither you nor I can flatter ourselves with pleasing Corinna; and as to me, all that I desire, is to enjoy occasionally the society of so astonishing a person:—let it be this evening, therefore, for once, since you have so arranged it.”—

“You’ll go along with me,” said the Count d’Erfeuil.—“Certainly,” answered Lord Nelvil, very visibly embarrassed.—“Why do you complain then of what

I have done?—You end as I began; but you must be always making yourself more reserved than I am, providing always that you lose nothing. Corinna is certainly charming; she has wit and gracefulness; I did not well understand what she said, because she spoke Italian, but at our interview, I dare say she will speak good French; we shall be judges of that this evening. She leads a very singular life; she is rich, young, free, without any one knowing to a certainty whether she has lovers or not. It seems certain, however, that at present she prefers no one in particular;—to be sure,” added he, “perhaps she has not met with any man in this country worthy of her; that would not astonish me.”

The Count d’Erfeuil went on in this manner for some time without Lord Nelvil interrupting him. He said nothing directly disagreeable; but he always harrassed the delicate sentiments of Os-

wald, by speaking too strongly or too frivolously of what interested him. There are refinements which wit itself, and the customs of the world, do not teach us; and, without failing the least in the most perfect politeness, we often wound the heart.

Lord Nelvil was much agitated the whole day by the thought of the evening's visit; but he dismissed, as well as he was able, the reflections which troubled him, and endeavoured to persuade himself that there might be pleasure in a sentiment, without this sentiment deciding the fate of one's life.

Lord Nelvil and the Count d'Erfeuil arrived at Corinna's; her residence was situated beyond the Castle of St. Angelo. The view of the Tiber embellished her house, which was adorned, in the interior, with the most perfect elegance. The hall was decorated with copies, in

plaister, of the best statues of Italy, Niobe, Laocoon, the Venus de Medicis, the Dying Gladiator, &c. and in the closet where Corinna was, were seen instruments of music, books, and furniture, simple and elegant, but convenient; and arranged merely so as to render conversation easy, and the circle select. Corinna was not in her closet when Oswald arrived; where, waiting for her, he walked about her apartment with anxiety; he remarked in every thing around him a happy mixture of what is most agreeable in the three nations, English, French and Italian; the taste for society, the love of letters, and the sentiment of the fine arts.

Corinna at last appeared; she was dressed without affectation, but yet in a very picturesque manner. She had some antique Cameos in her hair, and wore round her neck a coral necklace. Her politeness was frank and noble; in seeing

her thus familiarly in the midst of the circle of her friends, we then saw the divinity of the Capitol; and yet she was natural and simple in every thing. She first saluted the Count d'Erfeuil, looking at Oswald; and then, as if she repented of this kind of falsehood, she advanced towards Oswald: it may be remarked, that on calling him Lord Nelvil, this name seemed to produce a singular effect upon her; and twice she repeated it with a trembling voice, as if calling up some melting recollections.

At last, she said something in Italian to Lord N. full of grace, as to the obligation he had laid her under on the preceding day, by taking up her crown. Oswald answered her, by endeavoring to express the admiration with which she had inspired him, and gently complained that she did not speak to him in English. —Am I a greater stranger to-day than I was yesterday? “Certainly not,” re-

plied Corinna; “but when one has, like me, spoken for several years of my life two or three different languages, either the one or the other of them is inspired by the sentiments we ought to express.”

“Certainly,” said Oswald, “the English is your natural language—it is that which you speak to your friends—it is that——”

“I am an Italian,” said Corinna: “pardon me, my lord, but I think I recognise in you that national pride which often characterises your countrymen. In this country we are more modest: we are neither content with ourselves, like the French, nor proud of ourselves, like the English. A little indulgence from foreigners is sufficient for us; and, as it has been for a long time refused to allow us to be a nation, we are very wrong to be wanting so often in that dignity which is not allowed us as a people; but, when you know the Italians, you will find they have in their character some traces of ancient grandeur—some rare, effaced /

traces, but which might reappear in happier times. I shall speak English to you sometimes, but not always ; the Italian is dear to me : I have suffered much," she added, sighing, " in order to live in Italy."

The Count d'Erfeuil gently reproached Corinna with expressing herself in a language which he did not understand.— " Fair Corinna," he said, " for God's sake, speak French ; you are truly worthy of it." Corinna smiled at this compliment, and began to speak French, very purely, very easily, but with the English accent. Lord Nelvil and Count d'Erfeuil were equally astonished ; but the Count d'Erfeuil, who thought that any thing might be said, provided it was said gracefully, and who imagined that impoliteness consisted in the form, but not in the substance, directly asked Corinna the reason of this singularity. She was, at first, a little chagrined at this sudden in-

terrogatory ; but, resuming her spirits, she said to Count d'Erfeuil—" Perhaps I learnt the French language from an Englishman." He renewed his questions : Corinna was still more embarrassed, and at last said to him :—" During these four years that I have resided at Rome, none among my friends, of those whom I am sure are much interested in my welfare, have ever asked me such questions ; they found that it was painful for me to speak of my fate." These words put an end to Count d'Erfeuil's enquiries : but Corinna was afraid he was hurt, and, as he had the appearance of being very intimate with Lord Nelvil, she was anxious, she knew not why, that he should not speak disrespectfully of her to his friend, and she endeavoured to please him.

The Prince of Castel-Forte arrived at this moment, with several Romans, his own friends, and those of Corinna. They

were men of a gay and amiable disposition, so easily animated by the conversation of others, that we felt a lively pleasure in addressing them, as well as they felt, in a lively manner, what was worthy of being felt. The indolence of the Italians prevents them from shewing themselves in society. The most of them do not even cultivate in their retreat the intellectual faculties with which nature has endowed them; but they enjoy with transport what they acquire without difficulty.

Corinna had much gaiety in her mind. She perceived what was ridiculous with the sagacity of a French woman, and painted it with the imagination of an Italian; but she mixed a sentiment of good-will with every thing: nothing hostile was ever seen in her; because in every thing it is coldness alone that offends, and imagination, on the contrary, always creates good humour.

Oswald found Corinna full of grace, and it was a gracefulness which was new to him. A great and dreadful event of his life was attached to the recollection of a very amiable and sentimental French woman; but Corinna did not resemble her: her conversation was a mixture of all descriptions of knowledge; enthusiasm for the fine arts, and knowledge of the world; delicacy of ideas, and depth of sentiments; in short, all the charms of vivacity might be remarked in her, without her thoughts being ever incomplete, or her reflections frivolous.

Oswald was at once charmed and surprised; he could not conceive how a person could unite all that Corinna possessed; he asked himself if the union of so many qualities, almost opposite to each other, was in consequence or superiority; if she felt every thing, or forgot every thing successively, if she passed thus almost in a single moment

from melancholy to gaiety, from the most astonishing conversation, both in point of extensive knowledge and ideas to the coquetry of a woman, who wishes to please and to captivate; but there was in this coquetry so perfect a nobleness that she imposed respect as well as the most severe reserve.

The Prince of Castel-Forte was much occupied with Corinna, and all the Italians who composed her society expressed themselves by the most delicate and assiduous language: the habitual worship, with which they surrounded her, spread as it were an air of festivity over all the days of her life. Corinna was happy in being beloved; happy in being in a mild climate, in hearing harmonious sounds, and in receiving new but agreeable impressions. The profound and serious sentiment of love was not painted upon her countenance, where every thing was expressed by the most lively and flexible

physiognomy. Oswald regarded her in silence; his person animated Corinna and inspired her with a desire of being amiable. She stopped however sometimes at a period when her conversation was the most brilliant, astonished at the calm exterior of Oswald, not knowing if she had succeeded with him, if he secretly blamed her, or whether his English ideas permitted him to applaud so much success in a female.

Oswald was too much captivated by the charms of Corinna to recollect his old opinions upon the obscurity which was most proper for women; but he asked if it were possible that she loved him; if it were possible to concentrate in himself so many rays of excellence; in short he became agitated: and although long before his departure she had invited him very politely to repeat his visit, yet he allowed a whole day to pass, without going to her house, experiencing a kind

of terror of sentiment which led him away from the idea.

Sometimes he compared this new sentiment with the fatal error of the first transports of his youth, and he afterwards keenly repelled the comparison; because it was artifice, perfidious artifice, that had subjugated him, while it was impossible to doubt Corinna's truth. The charm with which she rivetted him, was it magic, or poetical inspiration? was she an Armida or a Sappho? Could he ever hope to captivate an imagination gifted with such rare wings? It was impossible to decide; but, at least, he felt that it was not society, that it was rather heaven itself which had formed this extraordinary being, and that her mind was equally incapable of imitation, as her character was of deception.—“ Oh, my father !” said Oswald, “ if you had known Corinna, what would you have thought of her ?”

CHAPTER II.

THE Count d'Erfeuil called next morning upon Lord Nelvil, according to custom, and reproaching him with not having been with Corinna the evening before—he said to him, “You would have been extremely happy had you been there.” “Why?” said Oswald. “Because I yesterday learnt to a certainty that you interested her much.” “Frivolity again,” said Lord Nelvil, interrupting him, “do’nt you know that I am not fond of this way of speaking?” “Do you call frivolity, the promptitude of my observations? Do I reason less accurately because I reason more quickly? You were all made to live in that happy time of the patriarchs, when man had five centuries of life; they have retrenched at

least four of them.” “Softly, I entreat you,” said Oswald; “and are these the observations you have formed so hastily?” “That Corinna loves you—Yesterday I went to her: certainly she received me extremely well; but her eyes were fixed upon the door in order to see if you followed me. She endeavoured for a moment to speak of something else; but as she is very lively, she at last asked me why you did not accompany me? I laid the blame on yourself; I said you did not wish to come. I said you were a melancholy eccentric creature; but I shall not tell you all the compliments I paid you.

“He is sorrowful,” said Corinna, “he has without doubt lost some person who was dear to him. For whom is he in mourning?—For his father, said I, although it is more than a year since he died; and as the law of nature obliges us all to survive our parents, I rather think

that some other secret victim is the cause of his long and profound melancholy.” “Oh !” replied Corinna, “ I am very far from thinking that sorrows, though in appearance similar, are felt in the same manner by all men. The father of your friend, and your friend himself are not perhaps of the common description, nay I am very much inclined to think they are not—her voice was very soft, my dear Oswald, on pronouncing these last words.” “ Are these all the proofs of interest,” replied Oswald, “ you told me of ? ” “ Indeed,” resumed the Count, “ they are sufficient, in my opinion, to convince you that you are beloved ; but since you wish for more proof, you shall have more : I have reserved the strongest for the end. The Prince Castel-Forte came in, and he related all your history at Ancona, without knowing that it was you he was speaking of ; he told it with a great deal of fire and imagination, so far as I can judge, thanks to the two lessons I have

had in Italian ; but there are so many French words in foreign languages, that we understand them all, even without knowing them : besides this, the physiognomy of Corinna explained what I did not hear. We there read the agitation of her heart so visibly ! she did not even breathe, that she might not lose a single word ; and when she asked if we knew the name of this Englishman, her anxiety was so great, that it was very easy to judge how much she was afraid lest any other name than yours should have been pronounced.”

“ The Prince Castel-Forte said he did not know who this Englishman was ; and Corinna turning towards me with vivacity exclaimed—Is it not true, Sir, that it was Lord Nelvil ? Yes, Madam, I answered, it was he ; and Corinna then melted into tears. She had not wept while the story was relating ; what could there be then in the name of the hero more

melting than in the story itself?" "She wept," exclaimed Lord Nelvil—"Ah! why was I not there"—then suddenly stopping, he threw down his eyes, and his manly countenance expressed the most delicate timidity; he hastened to resume his discourse, lest the Count d'Erfeuil might disturb his secret joy by taking notice of it. "If the adventure at Ancona deserves to be related," said Oswald, "tis to you also, my dear Count, that the honor of it belongs." "They talked much to be sure," said the Count laughing, "of a very amiable Frenchman who was there, my Lord, along with you; but no body except myself paid any attention to this parenthesis in the recital. The fair Corinna prefers you, she certainly thinks you the most faithful of the two; you will not be so any more perhaps, nay perhaps you will cause her more sorrow than ever I caused her; but women love grief, provided it is very romantic: thus you suit her best." Lord Nelvil was dis-

tracted at every word that fell from the Count d'Erfeuil ; but what could he say to him ? He never disputed, he never listened attentively enough to change an opinion once formed ; when his words were once uttered, he did not care about the consequences ; and the best way with those who heard him, was to forget them, if it were possible, as quickly as he forgot them himself.

CHAPTER III.

OSWALD went to Corinna in the evening with a sentiment of a novel kind; he thought that he was perhaps expected. How enchanting is the first gleam of intelligence with her we love! Before memory comes in to share with hope, before words have expressed the sentiments, before eloquence has been able to paint what we feel, there is in these first moments a certain kind of tumult and mystery in the imagination, more transitory than happiness, but still more heavenly.

Oswald upon entering Corinna's chamber felt more timid than ever; he saw that she was alone, and he was almost sorry for it; he wished he could have observed her for a long time in the midst of a crowd; he could have wished that

he had been assured in some way or another, of her professions for him, in place of finding himself suddenly engaged in an interview which might make Corinna grow cool with respect to him, if, as he was certain he did, he seemed to be embarrassed, and cold as a consequence of his embarrassment.

Whether Corinna perceived the disposition in Oswald, or that a similar disposition produced in her the desire of enlivening the conversation, in order to put an end to all constraint, she quickly asked Lord Nelvil if he had seen the monuments of Rome?—No, answered Oswald—What were you about yesterday then? replied Corinna, smiling—I spent the day at home, said Oswald: since my arrival in Rome, I have visited no person except yourself, Madam. Corinna wished to speak of his conduct at Ancona; she began with these words. I was informed yesterday:—she then stop-

ped and said, I will tell you all about it when the company arrives. Lord Nelvil had a dignity in his manners which intimidated Corinna ; and besides, she was afraid, that by recalling to his mind his noble conduct, she might shew too much emotion : she thought she would have less, when they were not by themselves. Oswald was deeply touched with Corinna's reserve, and with the frankness with which she betrayed, without thinking, the motives for this reserve, but the more he was agitated, the less he was able to express what he felt.

He therefore rose suddenly and walked towards the window ; he then thought that Corinna could not explain this movement, and more disconcerted than ever, he returned to his seat without saying a word. Corinna had more assurance in conversation than Oswald ; and yet she shared in his embarrassment, and in her distraction endeavouring to

keep her countenance, she put her fingers to the harp which stood by her side, and made some sounds without meaning a design. These harmonious sounds by encreasing Oswald's emotion seemed to inspire him with a little more hardihood. Already he had ventured to look at Corinna : Ah ! who could regard her without being struck by the divine inspiration painted in her eyes ? Encouraged at the same moment by the expression of goodness which veiled the lustre of her glances, perhaps Oswald would have spoken, when the Prince of Castel-Forte entered.

He did not see Lord Nelvil *tete-à-tete* with Corinna without jealousy ; but he had a habit of dissembling his impressions ; that habit, which among the Italians is often found joined with a great vehemence of sentiments, was in him rather the result of indolence and natural softness. He was contented with not

being the first object in Corinna's affections ; he was not young ; he had a great deal of wit, a great taste for the arts, an imagination lively enough to diversify life without disturbing it, and such an itch for passing his evenings with Corinna, that if she had been married, he would have beseeched her husband to allow him to visit her every day, according to custom ; and with this proviso, he would not be miserable in seeing her united to another. The chagrins of the heart in Italy are not complicated by the pangs of vanity, so that we there meet, either with men passionate enough to stab their rival from jealousy, or with men modest enough to hold cheerfully the second rank near the person of a woman whose conversation is agreeable to them ; but we seldom meet with those, who from the dread of being disdained, would refuse to resume any kind of relation, which might please

them; the empire of society over self-love is almost nothing in this country.

The Count d'Erfeuil, and the society which assembled at Corinna's every evening, being met, the conversation turned upon the talent for extempore composition which Corinna had so gloriously displayed in the Capitol, and they at last asked herself what she thought of it. "It is so rare," said the Prince of Castel-Forte, "to find a person at once susceptible of enthusiasm and of correct analysis, endowed like an artist and capable of observing with the eye of a critic herself, that we must conjure her to reveal to us as well as she can the secrets of her genius." "This talent for extempore composition," replied Corinna, "is not more extraordinary in the language of the South, than the eloquence of the forum, or the brilliant vivacity of conversation in other languages. I may even say, that unfortunately among us, it is easier to make

extempore verses than to compose well in prose. The language of poetry differs so much from that of prose, that, from the very first stanza, the attention is commanded by the expressions themselves, which place, as it were, the poet at a distance from his auditors. It is not merely to the sweetness of the Italian, but rather to the strong and distinct vibration of its sonorous syllables, that we must attribute the empire of poetry among us. The Italian has a musical charm which produces pleasure in the sound of the words, almost independently of the ideas; these words, besides, have almost all of them something picturesque, they paint what they express. You know that it is in the midst of the arts, and under a delightful sky, that this melodious and strongly-coloured language is formed. It is, therefore, easier in Italy than any where else to seduce with words without meaning, and without novelty in the images. Poetry, like all the fine

arts, captivates the sensations as much as the reason. I venture to say, however, that I never spoke extempore without a real emotion, or an idea which I thought was novel having animated me. I hope, therefore, that I am a little less indebted than others to our enchanting language. We may speak it at random almost, and still give a lively pleasure, merely by the charm of rhyme and harmony."

"You think, then," interrupted one of her friends, that the talent for extempore composition injures our literature; I thought so, also, before I heard you, but you have made me entirely return from that opinion."—"I said," resumed Corinna, "that there resulted from this facility, this literary abundance, a very great number of common-place poems; but I am very glad that this fertility exists in Italy, as it pleases me to see our own plains covered with a thousand superfluous productions. This liberality

of nature makes me proud. I am fond of this extensive talent, above all things, among the common people ; it makes us acquainted with their imagination, which is concealed in the lower class of other countries, and is developed among us alone. It gives something poetical to the lower classes of society, and saves us that contempt which we cannot help feeling for every thing that is vulgar, of any description. When our Sicilians, on conducting travellers into their boats, address them in the graceful dialect of amiable felicitations, and bid them a sweet and long adieu in verse, we may say, that the pure breath of heaven and of the sea acts upon the imaginations of men, like the wind upon the Eolian harps, and that poetry, like its sounds, is the echo of nature. One thing more attaches me to our extempore talent, which is, that this talent would be almost impossible in a society disposed for buffoonery ; there wants, allow me the expression, there-

wants the benevolence of the south, or rather of these countries, where they love to amuse themselves, without taking pleasure in visiting what amuses them, before poets will risk the dangerous enterprise of amusing their fellow-countrymen. A sarcastic smile is sufficient to damp the genius necessary for a sudden and uninterrupted composition ; the auditors must also be animated along with you, and their applauses must inspire you."

" But you, Madam, but you," said Oswald, at last, who had hitherto been silent, without taking his eyes off Corinna for a single moment, " to which of your poems do you give the preference? Is it to those which are the offspring of reflection, or of instantaneous inspiration?"—" My Lord," answered Corinna, with a look which expressed a great deal of interest, and also the most delicate sentiments of respectful consideration,

“ it would be you whom I should make the judge ; but if you ask me to examine myself what I think in this respect, I would say that these extempore effusions are to me like an animated conversation. I do not allow myself to be tied to this or to that subject: I give myself up to the impression produced upon me by the interest of those who listen to me, and it is to my friends that I owe, in particular, the greatest part of my talent of this description. Sometimes, the keen interest inspired by a conversation in which have been discussed grand and noble questions concerning the morality of man, his destiny, his duties, his affections ; sometimes this interest raises me above my own powers, enables me to discover in nature, in my own heart, bold truths, and expressions full of life, which solitary reflection could not have originated. I think I then experience a preternatural enthusiasm ; it often happens that I quit the rhyme of poetry, and express my

idea in prose ; and sometimes I quote the most beautiful verses of the various languages with which I am acquainted. These divine verses have penetrated my soul. Sometimes, also, I finish upon my lyre, by simple and national airs, the sentiments and thoughts which escape my words. In short, I feel myself a poet, not merely when a happy choice of rhymes and of harmonious syllables, when a happy union of images seizes the auditors, but when my soul is elevated, when it disdains from its eminence all egotism and baseness, in short, when a fine action would be easier to me ;—it is then that my verses are best. I am a poet, when I admire, when I despise, when I hate, not from personal sentiments, not on account of my own cause, but for the dignity of the human race, and the glory of the world.”

Corinna then perceived that the conversation had led her astray : she blushed ;

and turning to Lord Nelvil, she thus addressed him. “ You see I cannot approach any subject which affects me, without undergoing that kind of extacy which is the source of ideal beauty in the arts, of religion in solitary minds, of generosity in heroes, and of disinterestedness among men; pardon me, my Lord, although such a female by no means resembles those who are esteemed in your country.”—“ Who is there who resembles you?” replied Lord Nelvil; “ And can we make laws for a single person?”

The Count d’Erfeuil was in a real enchantment, although he had not heard all that Corinna said; but her gestures, the sound of her voice, her manner of pronouncing, charmed him; and it was the first time that a grace, which was not a French one, ever had any effect upon him. But, in truth, the great success of Corinna at Rome, put him a little in good humour with her—in ad-

miring her, he had not departed from his usual custom of being guided by the opinion of others.

He went away with Lord Nelvil; and he said to him in their way home: "You must allow, my dear Oswald, that I have at least some merit in not paying my addresses to so charming a person,"—"But," answered Lord Nelvil, "I think it is generally said, that it is not easy to please her."—"They say so," replied the Count, "but I scarcely believe it. A woman, single and independent, and who leads nearly the life of an artist, cannot be difficult to captivate." Lord Nelvil was hurt at this reflection. The Count d'Erfeuil, whether he did not perceive it, or whether he wished to follow the course of his own ideas, thus continued:

"Not, however," said he, "if I believed in the virtue of any woman, that I could not trust as cheerfully to Co-

rinna's as any other. She has certainly a thousand times more expression in her looks, more vivacity in her demonstrations, than is required among your countrymen, even among ours, to raise a suspicion as to the virtue of a female; but she is a person of a mind so superior, of an instruction so profound, of a feeling so exquisite, that the ordinary rules for judging of women cannot be applied to her. In short, you may believe that I find her very imposing, in spite of her vivacity, and her frankness of conversation. I wished yesterday, although I respected her interest for you, to say something at random, in favor of myself; it was that kind of words which may be taken as you please; if they are listened to, so much the better; and if they are not listened to, best of all: but Corinna looked at me in so cold a manner that she quite disturbed me. It is singular, however, to be timid with an Italian, an

artist, a poet; in short, where we ought to be completely at our ease.”—“ Her name is unknown,” replied Lord Nelvil; “ but her manners bespeak it to be illustrious!”—“ Ah! it is in romances,” said the Count, “ that it is usual to conceal what is finest; but in real life, we tell every thing that does us honor, and even a little more than the bare truth on such occasions.”—“ Yes,” said Oswald, “ in some societies, where they only think upon the effect they wish to produce upon each other; but where the existence is internal, there may be mysteries in certain circumstances, as there are secrets in the sentiments; and he alone who marries Corinna will know”——“ Marry Corinna;” interrupted the Count d’Erfeuil, bursting into laughter, “ that idea never entered my mind! Trust me, my dear Nelvil; if you wish to commit a folly, do that which is reparable; but in marriage, never consult any thing except

convenience. I may warn you frivolously; but, nevertheless, I warn you, that in the conduct of life, I shall be more reasonable than you."—"I think so too," answered Lord Nelvil:—he did not add a word more.

In fact, could he tell Count d'Erfeuil that there is often a great deal of egotism in frivolity, and that this egotism can never lead to errors of sentiment; to those errors in which we almost always sacrifice ourselves to others? Frivolous men are very capable of becoming expert in the management of their own interests; because, in every thing which is called the diplomatic science of private life, as well as of public life, we succeed much oftener by those qualities we have not, than by those we really possess. Absence of enthusiasm, absence of opinion, absence of sensibility, a little wit combined with this negative treasure, and social life, properly so called, that is

to say, fortune and rank, are acquired, or supported tolerably well. The jokes of Count d'Erfeuil had, nevertheless, given offence to Lord Nelvil. He blamed them; but he reflected upon them in too importunate a manner.

BOOK IV.

ROME.

CHAPTER I.

FIFTEEN days passed away, during which Lord Nelvil gave himself up entirely to the society of Corinna. He never left his own house, except to go to her's ; he saw nothing, he enquired after nothing, except at her house: without ever telling her his sentiments, he made her enjoy them every moment of the day. She was accustomed to the flattering homages of the Italians ; but the dignity of Oswald's manners, his apparent coldness, and his sensibility, which betrayed him, in spite of himself, exercised a much greater power upon her imagination.

Never did he relate a generous action, never did he speak of misfortune, without his eyes being filled with tears, and always he endeavoured to conceal his emotion. He inspired Corinna with a sentiment of respect which she had not felt for a long time. No mind, however distinguished it was, could astonish her ; but elevation and dignity of character acted very powerfully upon her. Lord Nelvil joined to these qualities a nobleness in the expressions, an elegance in the most trifling actions of life, which formed a contrast to the negligence and familiarity of most of the great Italian lords.

Although the tastes of Oswald were, in some respects, different from that of Corinna, yet they understood each other in a most wonderful manner. Lord Nelvil divined Corinna's impressions with the most perfect sagacity. Corinna discovered, by the slightest alteration of Lord

Nelvil's countenance, what was passing within him. Habituated to the turbulent demonstrations of passion among the Italians, that timid and obstinate attachment, that sentiment proved without ceasing and yet never avowed, spread throughout life an interest completely new. She felt as if environed by a milder and purer atmosphere; and every moment throughout the day occasioned a sentiment of happiness which she was fond of, without wishing to acknowledge it.

One morning, the Prince of Castel-Forte came to her: he was sorrowful, and she enquired the cause, "That Scotchman," said he, "is going to deprive us of your affections, and who knows but what he may take you far away from us!"—Corinna was a few moments silent. "I protest to you, he never told me he loved me."—"You think so, however," answered the Prince; "he speaks

to you by his actions, and even his silence is an expert method of interesting you. What, indeed, can be said to you that you have not heard before ! What praise is there that has not been offered to you ! What homage is there to which you have not been accustomed ! But there is something reserved, something veiled in the character of Lord Nelvil, which will never allow you to judge him completely, as you judge us. You are the easiest person in the world to know thoroughly ; but it is precisely because you shew yourself cheerfully such as you are, that reserve and mystery please and reign over you. What is unknown, whatever it is, has more ascendancy over you than all the sentiments we express towards you." Corinna smiled :—" Do you think then, my dear Prince," she said, " that my heart is ungrateful, and my imagination capricious ? I think, however, that Lord Nelvil possesses and displays qualities sufficiently remarkable to allow me

to flatter myself at having discovered them.”—“He is, I admit,” answered the Prince Castel-Forte, “a proud, generous, sensible man, and above all melancholic ; but I am much deceived if his tastes have the least resemblance to your’s. You do not perceive them, he is so much charmed by your presence ; but your empire over him would not continue if he were at a distance from you. The obstacles would fatigue him ; his mind has contracted, in consequence of the chagrins he has suffered, a kind of discouragement which must weaken the energy of his resolution ; and *you know*, besides, how much the English, in general, are attached to the manners and customs of their country.”

At these words Corinna sighed. Some painful reflections upon the first events of her life, were recalled to her ideas : but in the evening she saw Oswald more occupied with her than ever ; and all the

effect produced upon her mind by the conversation of the Prince of Castel-Forte was a desire to fix Lord Nelvil in Italy, by making him in love with the beauties of every description with which the country is furnished. It was in this view she wrote to him the following letter. The freedom of the kind of life they lead at Rome excused this step; and Corinna, in particular, although she might be reproached with too much frankness of character, knew how to preserve a great deal of dignity mixed with independence, and modesty with vivacity.

CORINNA TO LORD NELVIL.

15th Dec. 1794.

“ I do not know, my lord, whether you will charge me with having too much confidence in myself, or whether you will do justice to the motives which may excuse that confidence. Yesterday I heard you say that you had not yet

visited every place in Rome ; that you were neither acquainted with the *chefs-d'œuvre* of our fine arts, nor with the ancient ruins, which make us acquainted with history by the help of imagination and sentiment ; and I have conceived the idea of venturing to propose myself as your guide in these journies through past ages.

“ Without doubt Rome can easily furnish you with a great number of learned men, whose profound erudition might be extremely useful to you ; but, if I can succeed in making you fond of this place of residence, towards which I have always felt myself so strongly attracted, your own studies will finish what my imperfect hints will have begun.

“ A great many strangers come to Rome, as they would go to London or Paris, in order to court the distractions of a great city ; and if we dare confess

that we are ever tired of Rome, I think that most people would say so also : but it is equally true that we may here discover a charm of which we never become weary. Will you forgive me, my lord, in wishing that this charm should be known to you ?

“ Without doubt, we must here forget all the political interests of the world ; but when these interests are not connected with sacred duties or sentiments, they freeze the heart. We must also renounce what is called, in other places, the pleasures of society ; but these pleasures almost always tarnish the imagination. We enjoy at Rome an existence at once solitary and animated, which develops freely in ourselves all that heaven has implanted. I repeat it, my lord, pardon this love for my country, which makes me wish that it should be loved by a man like you ; and do not judge with English severity those testimonies of good will.

which an Italian thinks he can give, without losing in his own eyes or in yours.

“CORINNA.”

Oswald strove in vain to conceal how happy he was at receiving this letter ; he foresaw a confused futurity of enjoyments and happiness ; imagination, love, enthusiasm, every thing that there is divine in the mind of man, appeared to him united in the charming project of visiting Rome, in company with Corinna. For this once, he did not reflect ; for once he went out instantly to visit Corinna, and on his way he regarded the skies, he felt the fine climate, and he carried life lightly : his regrets and his fears were lost in the clouds of hope : his heart, for a long time oppressed by sadness, beat and startled with joy ; he was afraid that such a happy disposition could not last ; but the very idea that it was transitory, gave to this fervor of happiness more force and activity.

“ You are there ? ” said Corinna, upon Lord Nelvil’s entering: “ Ah ! I thank you,” and she gave him her hand. Oswald took it, carried it to his lips, with a lively tenderness, and did not, at this moment, labour under that painful timidity which was often mingled with his most agreeable impressions, and made him feel sometimes, in company with those he loved, bitter and painful sentiments. The intimacy between Oswald and Corinna had commenced since they had separated ; it was Corinna’s letter which had established it ; they were both content, and felt for each other a tender gratitude.

“ This morning, then,” said Corinna, “ I shall shew you the Pantheon, and St. Peter’s : I had always some hopes,” she added with a smile, “ that you would consent to visit Rome along with me :—my horses are ready.—I have been waiting for you—you have arrived—all is well—let us set out.”—“ Astonish-

ing girl!" said Oswald, "who are you, then? Where have you acquired so many various charms, which seemed to be incompatible: sensibility, gaiety, grace, frankness, and modesty? Are you an illusion? Are you a preternatural happiness bestowed upon the lives of those who meet with you?"—"Ah! if I could do you any good," replied Corinna, "you ought not to think that I would ever abstain from it."—"Take care," said Oswald, seizing her hand with emotion, "take care of what benefit you wish to confer upon me. For these two years past, a hand of iron has laid upon my heart; if your sweet presence has given some respite, what will become of me when I am restored to my fate? what will become of me?"—"Leave it to time, leave it to chance," said Corinna, "to decide if this impression of a day, which I have produced upon you, will last more than a day. If our souls understand each

other, our mutual affection will not be transitory. Be it what it may, let us go to admire together every thing that can elevate our minds and our sentiments; we shall always, in this manner, taste some moments of happiness." On finishing these words, Corinna descended, and Lord Nelvil followed her, astonished at her answer. He thought she admitted the possibility of a half-sentiment of a momentaneous attraction. In short, he thought he saw some levity in the manner in which she had expressed herself, and he was hurt by it.

He placed himself in Corinna's carriage, who, guessing his thoughts, said to him :—" I do not think the heart is so formed, that we must always experience, either no love at all, or else the most invincible passion : there are commencements of sentiment, which a more profound examination dissipates. We flatter and deceive ourselves, and even

the enthusiasm of which we are susceptible, if it renders the enchantment more rapid, may also make us cool more speedily." "You have reflected much upon this sentiment, madam," said Oswald.—Corinna blushed, and was silent a few minutes; then, resuming her discourse, with a mixture of dignity and frankness—"I do not think," said she, "that a woman of sensibility ever arrived at twenty-six years of age, without having been acquainted with love; but if, to have never been happy, if never to have met the object which could merit all the affections of the heart, is a title to some interest, I have a right to yours." These words, and the accent in which Corinna pronounced them, a little dissipated the cloud which had risen in Lord Nelvil's mind; nevertheless, he said to himself:—"She is the most seducing of women, but she is an Italian; and she has a timid, innocent heart, unknown to itself: doubtless pos-

sessed also by the young English girl, whom my father intended for me.

This young English girl was Lucilia Edgermond, the daughter of Lord Nelvil's father's best friend; but she was still too young when Oswald left England to be married, or even to foresee, with certainty, what might one day happen.

CHAPTER II.

OSWALD and Corinna went first to the Pantheon, which is now called *Santa Maria della Rotunda*. Throughout all Italy, Catholicism has taken up the inheritance of Paganism; but the Pantheon is the only ancient temple at Rome, which is entirely preserved; the only one in which we may remark the beauty of the architecture of the ancients, and the peculiar character of their worship. Oswald and Corinna stopped before the Pantheon, in order to admire its portico, and the columns which support it.

Corinna made Lord Nelvil remark, that the Pantheon is so built as to make it look much larger than it really is.—
“The church of St. Peter,” she said, “will produce quite a different effect upon you; you will think it, at first,

much less than it is in reality. The illusion so favourable to the Pantheon proceeds, as it is asserted, from there being more space between the columns, as the air plays freely round it; but, above all, from there being almost no ornaments in detail, while St. Peter's is overloaded with them. It is thus that ancient poetry only describes great masses, and leaves it to the thoughts of the auditor to fill up the intervals, to supply the developments: in every department, we moderns say too much.

“This temple,” continued Corinna, “was consecrated by Agrippa, the favourite of Augustus, to his friend, or rather to his master. Nevertheless, this master had the modesty to refuse the dedication of the temple, and Agrippa was forced to dedicate it to all the gods of Olympus, in order to fill the place of the god of the earth, Strength. There was a car of bronze at the top of the Pantheon, upon which were placed the statues of

Augustus and Agrippa. On each side of the portico, these same statues are to be found in another form; and upon the frontispiece of the temple we still read, that *Agrippa consecrated it*. Augustus gave his name to the age in which he lived, because he made an epoch of it for the human mind. The *chefs-d'œuvre* in different departments of his cotemporaries, formed, as it were, the rays of his aureolus. He knew how to honour men of genius, who cultivated letters, and in posterity his glory has been encreased by it.

“ Let us enter the temple,” said Corinna; “ you see it remains unroofed, almost as it was formerly. They say that this light, which comes from above, was the emblem of that divinity, who was above all others. The pagans always loved symbolical images. It seems, in fact, that this language agrees best with religion. The rain often falls upon these marble porches; but the rays of the sun

come to illuminate the prayers. What serenity ! what appearance of festivity do we remark in this edifice ! The pagans have deified life, and the Christians have deified death : but our Roman Catholicism, however, is less melancholic than that of the North. You will see this when you come to St. Peter's. In the interior of the sanctuary of the Pantheon are the busts of our most celebrated artists ; they decorate those niches which once contained the gods of the ancients. As, since the destruction of the empire of the Cæsars, we have scarce ever had a political independence in Italy, and we do not find here any great politicians or warriors. It is the genius of the imagination which forms our only glory ; but do you not find, my lord, that a people which thus honours the talents they possess, merit a much nobler destiny ?" " I am severe upon nations," answered Oswald ; " I always think they deserve their fate, whatever it is." " That is

hard," replied Corinna; "perhaps by living in Italy you will experience a sentiment of attachment for this beautiful country, which nature seems to have dressed out as a victim. But you must, at least, remember that the hope which is dearest to all the artists, and to all other lovers of glory of other countries, is to obtain a place here. I have already marked out mine," said she, shewing a nich as yet empty; "Oswald, who knows but you may return to this same place, when my bust is placed in that nich."—Oswald here interrupted her hastily:—"Sparkling with youth and beauty, how can you speak in this manner to him whom misery and sorrow have already bowed down to the grave?"—"Ah!" replied Corinna, "the storm may, in a moment, destroy these flowers, which now lift their heads to the sky. Oswald, my dear Oswald," she added, "why are you not happy? Wherefore———" "Do not interrogate me," said Lord Nel-

vil; “you have your secrets, I have mine; let us mutually respect each other’s silence. You do not know what emotion I should experience, were I to relate my misfortunes!” Corinna was silent, and her steps on leaving the temple were slower, and her looks more sedate:

She stopped under the Portico:—
“There,” said she to Lord Nelvil, “was an urn of porphyry, of the greatest beauty, brought from St. John Caterano; it contained the ashes of Agrippa, which were placed at the foot of the statue, which he erected to himself. The ancients took so much care in softening the idea of death, that they knew how to conceal every thing mournful or frightful. There was, besides, so much magnificence in their tombs, that the contrast of the stillness of death and the splendours of life was less felt among them. It is true, also, that the hope of another world being less cherished among them

than among Christians, the Pagans disputed the idea that after death we return to the bosom of the Eternal."

Oswald sighed, and maintained his silence. Melancholy ideas have so many charms, so long as we are not ourselves completely miserable, that when grief, in all its severity, siezes upon the mind, we cannot bear certain words without startling, which, at other times, would only excite in us more or less gentle reveries.

CHAPTER III.

ON going to St. Peter's, they passed the bridge of St. Angelo, and Corinna and Lord Nelvil crossed it on foot. "It was upon this bridge," said Oswald, "that on returning from the Capitol I for the first time thought a long time upon you." "I did not flatter myself," replied Corinna, "that this coronation at the Capitol would gain me a friend; but nevertheless, in searching after glory, I always hoped that she would make me fall in love! What would become of woman without this hope?" "Let us remain here a few minutes," said Oswald; "ah! what a recollection, at every period of my future life, will this place bring to my mind! 'twill recal the day I first saw you." "I may be deceived," replied Corinna, "but

I think we shall become dearer to each other in consequence of admiring in each other's company the monuments which speak to the soul by their true grandeur. The edifices in Rome are neither cold nor mute ; genius conceived, and memorable events have consecrated them ; perhaps also, Oswald, one must love a character such as your's, before one can enjoy the sensations resulting from every thing noble and beautiful in the universe." " Yes," replied Lord Nelvil, " but in looking at you, in listening to you, I have no occasion for other wonders." Corinna thanked him with a smile full of charms.

On their way to St. Peter's they stopped before the Castle of St. Angelo. " Here," said Corinna, " is an edifice, the exterior of which has great originality: this tomb of Adrian, changed into a fortress by the Goths, bears the double character of its first and second destination. Erected on purpose for the dead, an impenetrable

wall surrounds it, and yet the living have added something hostile to it by the external fortifications, which are contrasted with the silence and noble inutility of a funereal monument. We see upon the summit an angel of bronze with his naked sword (5) and in the inside are some horrid dungeons. All the events in the history of Rome, from the time of Adrian to the present day, have some connexion with this monument: Belisarius here defended himself against the Goths, and, almost as barbarous as his besiegers, he hurled against his enemies the fine statues which decorated the interior of the building. Crescentius, Arnault de Brescia, Nicolas Rienzi, (6) these friends of Roman liberty, who so often mistook the recollection of former times for presages of future success, defended themselves a long time in the tomb of an emperor. I venerate the stones which are thus connected with so many illustrious facts; I admire that species of luxury in which the masters of the

world indulged, in the magnificence of their tombs. There is something grand in that man, who, although possessing all the sublunary enjoyments, and all the pomp of this world, is not afraid of looking forward to the period of his death. Moral ideas, disinterested sentiments, fill the soul, as soon as it quits the narrow limits of mortality, and looks forward beyond the grave.

“ From this spot,” continued Corinna, “ we ought to perceive St. Peter’s, and the columns which project from it were once to have extended thus far ; such was the superb plan of Michael Angelo ; he hoped at least that it would be finished after his death : but those of the present age never think of posterity ! When enthusiasm has been once turned into ridicule, every moral sentiment is defeated, and nothing is respected except money and power.” “ What !” exclaimed Lord Nelvil, “ is it you who hazard this sen-

timent? have you never enjoyed the happiness which I feel? Do you say this of Rome? Rome exhibited by you, Rome interpreted by imagination and genius: *Rome! which is itself a world, animated by sentiment, and without which the world itself would be a desert!*(7) Ah! Corinna, what will succeed to these days, which are far happier than any destiny permits." Corinna answered softly, "All the sincere affections come from Heaven, Oswald; why should it not protect what it has inspired? It belongs to Heaven to dispose of us."

St. Peter's was now in sight; that edifice, the greatest which men have yet raised, for the pyramids of Egypt themselves are inferior to it in point of height: "I ought, perhaps," said Corinna, "to have shewn you this finest of our edifices last of all; but that is not my system. It seems to me, that in order to render one's mind sensible to the arts, we should

begin by viewing objects which inspire a lively and profound admiration. This sentiment once experienced, reveals, as it were, a new sphere of ideas, and afterwards renders more capable of loving and of judging all those, who, although in a lower degree, nevertheless retrace the first impression they have received. All these gradations, these prudent and graduated methods for preparing the mind for grand effects are not to my taste. We do not arrive at the sublime by degrees, nay, it is separated by infinite distances from what is not beautiful." Oswald felt a most extraordinary emotion on arriving in front of St. Peter's. It was the first time that the work of man ever produced upon him the effects of the wonders of nature. It is the only work of art in our present world possessing that kind of grandeur which characterises the immediate works of the creation. Corinna enjoyed the astonishment of Oswald—"I have chosen," she said, "a

day on which the sun shines with all his lustre, for shewing you this monument. I reserve for you an innate, a religious pleasure, that of contemplating it by moonlight; but you must first be present at the most brilliant scene in the universe, the genius of man decorated by the magnificence of nature."

The Place, or Square of St. Peter, is surrounded by columns, which appear light at a distance, but very massy upon a closer inspection. The ground, which gradually ascends as we approach the portico of the church, also adds to the effect it produces. An obelisk, 80 feet high, which seems scarcely elevated in presence of the cupola of St. Peter's, is situated in the middle of the square. The very form of an obelisk has something in it which pleases the imagination; its summit loses itself in the air, and seems to carry up to Heaven a grand idea of mankind. This monument, which came from

Egypt, in order to adorn the baths of Caligula, and which Sixtus the Fifth afterwards caused to be brought here; this cotemporary of so many ages, which have made no impression upon it, inspires a sentiment of respect; man finds himself of so fleeting a nature, that he always feels some emotion in presence of that which is immovable. At some distance from the two sides of the obelisk, two fountains are erected, the water from which gushes perpetually, and forms a cascade in the air. This murmuring of water, which we are accustomed to hear amid rural scenery, produces here a sentiment of a novel kind; but this sensation is in harmony with that excited by the prospect of a majestic temple.

Painting and sculpture, imitating as they do for the most part the human figure, or some object existing in nature, awaken in our mind ideas perfectly clear and positive; but a beautiful architec-

tural monument has, if we may be allowed the expression, no determinate meaning and we are seized on contemplating it by an inexpressible reverie, which leads the mind astray. The noise of the water agrees with all these vague and profound impressions; it is as uniform as the edifice is regular.

“ *L'éternel mouvement et l'éternel repos,*”*

are thus connected with each other. It is on such a place as this that even time itself makes no impression, because it neither injures these sparkling fountains, nor shakes these large immovable stones. The water which gushes in spray from these fountains is so light and frothy, that in a fine day the rays of the sun produce rainbows of the finest colours in these vapours.

“ Stop here a moment,” said Corinna to Lord Nelvil, as he entered the portico

* Eternal motion and eternal rest.—*Vérités*, by M. Fontaine.

of the church, “ stop until I draw aside the curtain which hangs before the door of the temple ; Does not your heart beat upon approaching this sanctuary ? Do you not feel, at the moment of entering, all which ought to be excited by the expectation of a solemn event ? ” Corinna then drew aside the curtain, and held it until Lord Nelvil passed ; there was so much gracefulness in this attitude of Corinna, that the first glances of Oswald were occupied with surveying her, and for a few minutes he looked at nothing else. He now advanced into the temple, and the impression he received under these immense vaults was so profound and so religious, that even the sentiment of love no longer was sufficient to fill his soul entirely. He walked slowly by the side of Corinna ; both were silent. There every object around us commands silence ; the least noise reverberates so far that no word seems worthy of being repeated in a mansion almost eternal ! Prayer alone,

the sorrowful accents of some feeble voice which it spreads, excites a profound emotion in this vast place: and when under these immense domes we hear the distant steps of an old man tottering upon these beautiful marbles watered by so many tears, we feel that man is respectable, even on account of that infirmity of his nature, which subjects his immortal soul to so many sufferings. We feel that Christianity, the worship of the miserable, contains the true secret of our journey through life.

Corinna interrupted Oswald's reverie: "You must have seen," said she, "the Gothic churches in England and Germany, and you may have remarked, that they have a much more dismal character than this church. There is something mystical in the Catholicism of the northern nations.—Our's speak to the imagination by means of external objects. Michael Angelo said, upon seeing the

cupola of the Pantheon, 'I shall place St. Peter's in the sky!' and in fact St. Peter's is a temple, resting upon a church. There is some alliance between the ancient religions and Christianity in the effect produced upon the imagination by the interior of this edifice. I often take a walk here in order to restore to my soul the serenity it sometimes loses. The sight of such a monument is like a continual and fixed music, which waits for you in order to make you happy when you approach it; and certainly we may place among the number of titles to glory, which our nation boasts of, the patience, the courage, and the disinterestedness of the heads of the Church, who consecrated one hundred and fifty years, so much money and such toil to the finishing of an edifice, which those who raised it could never hope to enjoy. (8) It is even rendering a service to public morals to bequeath to a nation a monument which is the emblem of so many noble

and generous ideas." "Yes," answered Oswald, "here the arts possess grandeur; the imagination and the invention are full of genius; but how greatly is the dignity of man neglected! How silly are the institutions, and how great the weakness of most of the governments in Italy! and yet how great is the servility of the people!" "Other nations," said Corinna, "have groaned under the yoke like us, but we at least possess an imagination which enables us to dream of a better destiny."

"*Servi siam sì, ma servi ognor frementi.*"

"We are slaves, but always fretful ones,"

Says Alfieri, the boldest of our modern writers. There is so much soul in our fine arts that perhaps one day our character will rival our genius.

"Look," said Corinna, "at these statues placed upon the tombs! these pictures in Mosaic; patient and faithful

copies of the chefs-d'œuvre of our great masters. I shall never examine St. Peter's in detail, because I do not like to find thereby those multiplied beauties which derange a little the impression of the *toute ensemble*. But how is it possible that a monument, or the chefs-d'œuvre themselves of the human mind, should ever appear to be superfluous ornaments! This temple is like a world within itself. It has its seasons—a perpetual spring, which the exterior atmosphere never alters. A subterranean church is erected under the pavement of this temple; the popes, and several sovereigns of foreign countries are buried here: Christina, after her abdication, and the Stuarts, after their dynasty was overturned, were here interred. Rome has long been the asylum of the exiles of the world: Rome herself, has she not been dethroned! her aspect, therefore, consoles monarchs who have been stripped of their regal dignity like her.

“ Cadono le città, cadono i regni,

“ E l'uom, d'esser mortal, par che si sdegni.”

“ Cities fall, empires disappear, yet man himself
“ frets because he is mortal.”

“ Place yourself here,” said Corinna to Lord Nelvil, “ near the altar in the middle of the cupola, you will perceive through the iron grâtings the church of the dead, which is under o’ r feet; and upon raising your eyes, your sight will scarcely reach the summit of the vaulted dome. This dome, on viewing it from below, inspires a sentiment of terror. We think we see an unfathomable gulph suspended above our heads. Every thing beyond a certain proportion produces in man, that limited being, an invincible terror. What we are acquainted with is therefore equally inexplicable with what is unknown to us; but we are, as it were, habituated to obscurity, while new mysteries terrify and disturb our faculties.

“ All this church is ornamented with antique marbles, and these stones know more than we do of the ages which are passed. Here is the statue of Jupiter, which they have converted into a St. Peter, by placing a glory upon his head. The general expression of this temple characterises perfectly the mixture of dismal dogmas and brilliant ceremonies; there is a foundation of sadness in the ideas, but in their application the gentleness and vivacity of the south—severe intentions, yet mild interpretations—the Christian theology and the images of Paganism; in short, the most wonderful union of splendour and of majesty that man can give to his worship of the deity.

“ Tombs decorated with the wonderful productions of the fine arts, do not present death under a forbidding aspect. But it is not the decorations of the ancients, who sculptured dances and games upon their sarcophagi, that have this su-

periority: the tombs of the moderns take off our contemplation from a dead body by the chefs-d'œuvre of genius. They present immortality to our ideas on the very altar of death; and the imagination, animated by the admiration they inspire, does not feel that coldness and silence which are the immovable guardians of sepulchres in northern climates." "Without doubt," said Oswald, "we wish that sadness should surround the tomb; and even before we were enlightened by the light of Christianity, our ancient mythology, as handed down to us by our celebrated poet Ossian, placed by the side of the tomb nothing but complaints and funeral dirges. Here you forget and enjoy yourselves; I know not if I should wish that your fine climate should do me this species of service." "Do not, however, imagine," resumed Corinna, "that our character is light, and our understanding shallow. Vanity alone can render it trifling, and indolence may indeed inter-

pose some intervals of slumber or forgetfulness into life, but it does not weaken or dishonour the heart ; and, unhappily for us, we can relinquish this condition by more profound and terrible passions than those of minds habitually active."

Corinna and Lord Nelvil, at the close of this conversation, had arrived at the door of the church.—“ Another last glance towards this capacious sanctuary,” said she to Lord Nelvil ; “ see of how small consideration man is in the presence of the deity ; then indeed we are compelled to consider him only as his material emblem ! See what stability, what durability men can impart to their works, while they themselves pass away so rapidly, and survive only by their genius ! This temple is an image of the Almighty, there are no bounds to the feelings which it raises, to the ideas which it calls back, to the great number of years which it

brings to our view, both past and to come; and when we cross its threshold, we appear to pass from celestial ideas to the interests of the world, and from a religious eternity to the empty air of time."

Corinna pointed out to Lord Nelvil, when they had quitted the church, that the metamorphoses of Ovid were represented in bass relief on the doors. "We are not offended at Rome," said she, "with the images of Paganism, when the fine arts have consecrated them. The wonders of genius always impart to the mind a religious impression, and we dedicate to the Christian worship all the chefs-d'œuvre to which the other worships have given rise."—Oswald smiled at this explanation—"Believe me, my lord," continued Corinna, "there is much honesty in the sentiments of nations whose imaginations are very lively. But to-morrow, if you please, I shall con-

duct you to the Capitol. I have yet, I hope, several excursions to propose to you; when these are gone through, will you then leave us? will you——” She stopped, fearing she had already said too much—“ No, Corinna,” said Oswald, “ no, I shall not forfeit this beam of kindness, which perhaps a tutelary angel causes to shine upon me from Heaven.”

CHAPTER IV.

ON the following day, Oswald and Corinna set out with more confidence and serenity. They were friends travelling together; they began to say, “we.” Ah! how affecting is “we,” articulated by love! What a declaration it contains, timidly, and yet forcibly expressed? “We are to proceed then to the Capitol,” said Corinna. “Yes, let us go there,” replied Oswald; “and his voice expressed all, with words as simple, as his accent was full of tenderness and sweetness!”—“It is from the top of the Capitol, as it is at present,” said Corinna, “that we can easily distinguish the seven hills. We will immediately survey them one after the other; there is not one of them to which some vestiges of history are not attached.”

Corinna and Lord Nelvil followed first that which was formerly called the "*via sacra*," or the triumphal way. "Your carriage has gone that way," said Oswald to Corinna—"Yes," she replied, "this antient dust should be astonished to support such a carriage; but, since the Roman republic, so many criminal marks are imprinted on this route, that the feelings of veneration which it inspired, are much weakened." Corinna then proceeded to the foot of the staircase of the present Capitol. The entrance to the antient Capitol was by the forum. "I should be much pleased," said Corinna, "had this staircase been the same that Scipio ascended, when, overwhelming calumny by glory, he went to give thanks to the Gods for the victories he had obtained. But this new staircase, and this new Capitol, have been erected on the ruins of the antient, to receive the peaceful magistrate, who centres in himself that comprehensive title of Ro-

man Senator, formerly the object of the respect of the world. Here we have only empty names, but their correspondence and their antient dignity, always occasion a sort of commotion, a sensation sufficiently agreeable, mingled with pleasure and regret. I asked a poor woman the other day, where she lived? At the Tarpeian Rock, she answered, and this word, although divested of the ideas that were formerly attached to it, still operates upon the imagination."

Oswald and Corinna halted to observe the two lions in basalt, which are at the foot of the staircase of the Capitol. They come from Egypt; the Egyptian sculptors imitated, with much more genius, the figure of animals, than that of men. These lions of the Capitol are nobly peaceable, and their species of physiognomy, is the true representation of tranquillity with strength.

"A guisa di leon, quando si porta.—DANTE.

"After the manner of the lion when at rest."

Not far from these lions is a mutilated Roman statue, which the modern Romans have placed there, without reflecting that they thereby afford the most perfect emblem of their own city. This statue has neither head, nor feet, but the body, and the drapery, which remain still, possess their antient beauty. At the top of the staircase are two colossal statues, which represent, as is believed, Castor and Pollux, also the trophies of Marius, two milliary columns which served to ascertain the extent of the Roman empire, and the equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius, graceful and placid, amid the distractions of his various occupations. Thus we have united the heroic times represented by the Dioscuri, the republic by the lions, the civil wars by Marius, and the flourishing period of the emperors by Marcus Aurelius.

In approaching the modern Capitol, we see two churches erected on the

ruins of Jupiter Feretrius, and Jupiter Capitolinus, the one on the right hand, the other on the left. In front of the Vestibule is a fountain, presided over by two rivers, the Nile and the Tiber, with the wolf of Romulus. The name of the Tiber is not pronounced, as that of a river without glory, it is one of the pleasures of Rome to say: "Conduct me to the banks of the Tiber; let us cross the Tiber." It appears as if in pronouncing these words, history is called back, and the dead reanimated. In going to the Capitol on the side of the forum, we observe, on the right hand, the Mamertine prisons. These prisons were first built by Ancus Martius, and were used for ordinary criminals. But Servius Tullius caused much more cruel ones to be constructed under ground for state-criminals, as if these prisoners were not worthy of the least consideration, though there might have been honesty in their errors. Jugurtha, and the accomplices of Cati-

line, perished in these prisons. It is also said, that St. Peter and St. Paul were imprisoned in them. On the other side of the Capitol is the Tarpeian rock; at the foot of this rock, we remark an hospital, called "The Hospital of Consolation." It appears that the rigid spirit of antiquity, and the mildness of Christianity, have thus approximated in Rome, after a lapse of ages, and present themselves to the eye, as well as to the mind.

When Oswald and Corinna had arrived at the top of the town of the Capitol, Corinna shewed him the seven hills, the city of Rome bounded at first by the Palatine Hill, then by the walls of Servius Tullius, which included the seven hills, and lastly, by the walls of Aurelian, which still served to encompass the greater part of Rome. Corinna called to mind the verses of Tibullus and Propertius, which exult in the weak beginnings, whence

sprang the mistress of the world. (10.) The Palatine Hill was by itself alone the whole of Rome for some time; but, in the sequel, the palace of the emperors covered the ground, which had been sufficient for a whole nation. A poet of the time of Nero, made the following epigram on this occasion.

Roma domus fiet; Veios migrate, Quirites;
Si non et Veios occupat ista domus.

“Rome shall be henceforth only a palace: Romans, migrate to Veii, if however, this palace does not already comprehend Veii itself.”

The seven hills are infinitely less lofty than they were formerly, when they deserved the name of “steep mountains.” Modern Rome is raised about 40 feet above antient Rome. The vallies, which separated the hills, are almost filled up by time, or with the ruins of buildings; but that which is still more remarkable, is, that a heap of broken vases has raised

two new hills*, and it is almost a representation of modern times, when we see this progress, or rather this wreck of civilization, levelling mountains with valleys, and destroying in the moral, as well as the physical world, all the beautiful inequalities of nature, which ornament her appearance.

Three other hills†, not comprehended among the celebrated seven, impart to Rome an appearance so picturesque, that it is perhaps the only city, which, without assistance, and within its own circumference, presents the most magnificent prospects. We see so remarkable a mixture of ruins and buildings, that we may survey Rome on all sides, and never fail to behold a very striking picture in the scene before us.

* Mount Citorio and Testacio.

† The Janicule, Mount Vaticano, and Mount Mario.

Oswald could not refrain from contemplating the vestiges of ancient Rome, from the elevated point of the Capitol, to which Corinna had conducted him. The reading of history, and the reflections to which it gives rise, operate less forcibly on our minds, than these stones in disorder, than these ruins interspersed with new habitations. The eyes tyrannize over the soul; after having seen the Roman ruins, we reflect on the ancient Romans, as if we had been contemporary with them. The flights of imagination arise from an impression more immediate and more intimate, which gives life to our thoughts, and renders us so to speak, witnesses of what we have only learned. Without doubt we are annoyed by all the modern buildings, which interfere with the ancient ruins. But a portico standing by the side of a humble roof; columns, between which they have contrived to place little church windows; or a tomb, become the refuge of the whole

of a rustic family, produce an indescribable mixture of grand and simple ideas, and a pleasure of discovery which inspires a continual interest. Every thing is common, every thing is prosaic in the exterior of most of our European cities, and Rome more than any other, presents the mournful appearance of misery and degradation; but all at once, a broken column, a half-destroyed bas-relief, stones united by the indestructible means of the ancient architects, remind us, that there is in man an eternal power, a spark of divinity, and that we must not omit to excite it in ourselves, and to re-animate it in others. This Forum, whose extent is so limited, and which has been the scene of so many surprizing things, is a striking proof of the moral dignity of man. When the world, in the later periods of Rome, was under the dominion of rulers without glory, we find whole ages when history could scarce preserve a few facts, and this Forum, a little spot, the centre of a

village, then very circumscribed, and whose inhabitants were in continual contests all around for their territory, yet has not this Forum, by the recollections that it calls back, occupied the greatest geniuses of all ages? Honor then, eternal honor be to a brave and free people, since they thus engage the attention of posterity.

Corinna remarked to Lord Nelvil, that very few wrecks of the republican times were discoverable in Rome. The aqueducts, the canals constructed underground for the conveyance of water, were the only luxury of the republic, and of the kings which preceded it. We have remaining from the republic, nothing but edifices still useful, monuments erected to the memory of her great men, and some temples of brick, which yet continue standing. It was not till after the conquest of Sicily, that the Romans, for the first time, made use of marble for their

monuments; but, it is sufficient to behold the places where great transactions have happened, to create an undefinable emotion. It is to this disposition of mind, that we should ascribe the religious power of pilgrimages. Celebrated countries of all kinds, even when they are despoiled of their great men and their monuments, exercise a considerable degree of power over the imagination. That which struck the eye exists no longer, but the charms of recollection still operate.

We can no longer discover upon the forum any traces of that famous rostrum from which the Roman people were controlled by eloquence; but we still find three columns of a temple built by Augustus in honor of Jupiter the Thunderer, when a thunderbolt fell close to him, without injuring him, and an arch of Septimus Severus, which the senate erected to him as a reward for his ex-

ploits. The names of his two sons, Caracalla and Geta, were inscribed on the pediment of the arch, but when Caracalla had murdered Geta, he caused his name to be obliterated, and we can still see the traces of the erased letters. More distant, is a temple of Faustinus, a monument of the blind weakness of Marcus Aurelius; a temple of Venus, which, in the republican times, was dedicated to Pallas; a little further off, the ruins of a temple dedicated to the Sun and Moon, built by the emperor Adrian, who was jealous of Apollodorus, a celebrated Grecian architect, and put him to death, for having condemned the proportions of his building.

From the other side of the place we see the ruins of some monuments consecrated to more noble ends, to recollections more pure. The columns of a temple which is believed to be that of Jupiter Stator. Jupiter, who prevented

the Romans from ever flying before their enemies. A column, a vestige of a temple of Jupiter Guardian, placed, as we are told, not far from the abyss into which Curtius precipitated himself. Columns of a temple erected as some say to Concord, as others say to Victory. Is it possible that a victorious nation can confound these two ideas, and imagine that a true peace cannot exist till they have conquered the world? At the extremity of Mount Palatine is erected a beautiful triumphal arch, devoted to Titus for the conquest of Jerusalem. They report that the Jews who are at Rome never pass under this arch, and we are shewn a narrow way, which they are said to take, in order to avoid it. It were to be wished, for the honor of the Jews, that this anecdote were true; long recollections are congenial to lengthened misfortunes.

Not far from thence is the arch of

Constantine, embellished with some bas-reliefs removed from the forum of Trajan by the Christians, who wished to decorate the monument raised to the "Founder of Repose," as Constantine was denominated. The arts, at this period, were already on the decline, and they despoiled the past to honor new exploits. The triumphal gates, which are still seen at Rome, perpetuated, as much as men could do it, the honors bestowed upon glory. There was upon their summits a place to accommodate performers upon the flute and the trumpet, so that the conqueror, in his passage, might be gratified at the same time with music and with panegyric, and might feel, at one and the same moment, the most exalted emotions.

In front of these triumphal arches are the ruins of a temple of Peace, built by Vespasian; it was so ornamented with bronze and gold in the inside, that when

an incendiary destroyed it, streams of heated metal ran as far as the forum. Lastly, the Colisæum, the most beautiful ruin of Rome, finishes that noble circuit, which all history produces as a medium of comparison. This superb edifice, the stones of which, robbed of their gold and marble, still remain, served as a theatre for the gladiators to encounter wild beasts. It was thus that the Roman people were amused and deceived by strong emotions, when natural sentiments could no longer influence them. The entrance into the Colisæum was by two doors, the one of which was dedicated to the conquerors, and through the other they carried the dead.* Strange contempt of the human species, to devote beforehand the life or death of man to the mere pastime of an exhibition!

* Sana vivaria, sandapilaria.

Titus, the best of their emperors, dedicated this Colisæum to the Roman people, and these admirable ruins carry with them so high a character for magnificence and genius, that one is tempted to deceive one's-self with respect to real grandeur, and to bestow upon the master-pieces of art, the admiration that is due only to the monuments of liberal institutions."

Oswald did not suffer himself to be so much led away by admiration as Corinna, in contemplating these four galleries, these four buildings, rising, one above the other; and the mixture of pomp and antiquity, which at once inspires respect and regret;—he beheld in these places only the luxury of the master and the blood of the slave, and felt himself prejudiced against the fine arts, which do not disturb themselves about motives, but lavish their gifts on any object to

which they are directed. Corinna endeavoured to oppose this disposition.—“Do not,” said she to Lord Nelvil, “do not introduce the rigor of your principles of morality and justice into the contemplation of the monuments of Italy; they recal, for the most part, I have already admitted, rather the splendour, the elegance, and the taste of the antique forms, than the glorious era of Roman virtue. But do not you discover some traces of the moral grandeur of the early ages in the colossal luxury of the monuments which have succeeded them? Even the degradation of the Roman people is still commanding; their mourning for liberty fills the world with wonder, and their taste for ideal beauties seeks to console mankind for the real and true dignity which they have lost. Observe these immense baths, open to all those who wish to taste oriental pleasures;—these aqueducts, which in an instant rendered their theatres a large lake, where galleys engaged in

battle in their turn, these crocodiles which appeared in the place where lions were but lately exhibited ;—such was the luxury of the Romans, when luxury was their boast! These obelisks, brought from Egypt, and stolen from the shades of the Africans to be made ornaments to the sepulchres of the Romans—this population of statues, which formerly existed in Rome, cannot but be considered as the useless and ostentatious pomp of the despots of Asia ; it is the Roman genius, conqueror of the world, which the arts have clothed with an exterior form. There is a train in this magnificence, and its poetical splendour blots from our recollection its origin and its tendency.”

The eloquence of Corinna excited the admiration of Oswald without convincing him ;—he sought every where for a moral sentiment, and all the magic of the arts could not suffice him. Then Corinna recollected, that in this very theatre the

persecuted Christians died the victims of their constancy, and shewing to Lord Nelvil the altars raised to their ashes, and that career of the cross which follows penitents to the foot of the most magnificent ruins of earthly grandeur, she demanded of him, “if this dust of the martyrs said nothing to his heart?” “Yes!” exclaimed he, “I admire exceedingly that strength of mind and of will among the pangs of death: a sacrifice which, whatever it may be, is more praise-worthy and more difficult than all the sallies of the soul or of the thoughts. An exalted imagination may produce the wonders of genius, but it is only in falling a sacrifice to our opinion or sentiments that we are truly virtuous; it is then alone that a celestial power subdues in us the mortal man.”—Corinna was, however, agitated at these noble and exalted words;—she looked at Lord Nelvil—then cast down her eyes; and when at that instant he seized her

hand, and pressed it to his heart, she shuddered at the idea, that such a man could sacrifice others and himself to the indulgence of peculiar opinions, principles and duties.

CHAPTER V.

AFTER the tour of the Capitol and Forum, Corinna and Lord Nelvil employed two days in surveying the Seven Hills. The Romans, of former times, instituted a festival in honour of these Seven Hills; it is one of the original beauties of Rome, that these mountains comprehend its whole compass; and we easily comprehend how the love of country delights to celebrate this singular circumstance.

Oswald and Corinna having, on the preceding day, seen the Capitoline Hill, renewed their course by the Palatine. The Palace of the Cæsars, called the palace of Gold, entirely covered it. This hill now presents nothing to the

observer but the ruins of this palace: Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, and Nero built upon the four sides of it, but a few stones, overgrown by the rank grass, are all that remain of ancient grandeur. Nature has resumed her empire over the labours of man, and the beauty of the flowers afford some consolation for the ruin of the Palace. — The luxury of the age of the kings and of the republic consisted solely in the public edifices; private houses were small and simply constructed. Cicero, Hortensius, and the Gracchi, lived upon the Palatine Hill, which, on the decline of Rome, scarcely sufficed for the residence of a single man. — In latter times, the nation was no more than a nameless multitude, known only by the era of its master: one looks in vain for the two laurels planted before the Augustan gate, the laurel of war, and that of the fine arts cultivated in peace; both have disappeared.

There still remains on the Palatine Hill, several apartments of the baths of Livy ; there they shew the marks of precious stones, which were in former times lavished on the adorning of ceilings as if they had been mere ordinary ornaments, and there we behold paintings, the colours of which are still perfectly fresh ; even the evanescent effect of colours adds to the astonishment on seeing them preserved, and recalls time past to our recollection. If it be true that Livy took the life of Augustus, it is in one of these apartments that the atrocious act was perpetrated ; and the eyes of the sovereign of the universe, betrayed by his most sincere affections, were perhaps fixed upon one of these pictures, the exquisite tints of which still remain. What, in his old age did he think of his life, and triumphs ? Did he recall to his memory his proscriptions or his glory ? did he fear or hope for a future world ? and the last sigh which is breathed from the

soul of man, the last idea of a master of the universe, does it still vibrate under these domes?

The Aventine Hill presents, more than any other, the earliest traces of the Roman history. Exactly in front of the palace erected by Tiberius, we perceive the ruins of the Temple of Liberty erected by the father of the Gracchi. At the bottom of this hill stood the temple dedicated to Fortuna Virilis by Servius Tullius, to return thanks to the gods, who, from being born a slave, had made him a king. Beyond the walls of Rome we also find the ruins of a temple, consecrated to the fortune of women, on the spot where Volturnia arrested the course of Coriolanus. Opposite the Aventine is the Janiculum Hill on which Porsenna stationed his army. It is in front of this hill that Horatius Cocles cut down behind him the bridge which led to Rome; the foundations of this bridge still re-

main. There is, upon the bank of the river, a triumphal arch built with brick, as simple as the action in commemoration of which it was erected was glorious. This arch, they inform us, was raised in honour of Horatius Cocles. In the middle of the Tiber we perceive an island formed by the sheaves of corn reaped from the lands of Tarquin, and which were for a long time exposed upon the stream because the Roman people, believing that a curse was attached to them, would not make use of them. In our days it would scarcely be possible to lay a malediction so heavy upon any species of wealth as to prevent people from eagerly grasping at the possession of it.

On the summit of the Aventine Hill stood the temples dedicated to patrician and plebeian charity. At the foot of this hill we find the temple of Vesta, which still exists in an almost perfect state, although often threatened by inunda-

tions of the Tiber.* Not far from hence are the ruins of a prison for debtors, in which that fine instance of filial piety, so generally known, was performed. It is also near the same place where Clelia and her companions, prisoners to Porsenna, crossed the Tiber in order to rejoin the Romans. This Aventine Hill relieves the mind from all the painful recollections excited by the others, and its appearance is as beautiful as the recollections it produces are delightful. They have bestowed the name of the beautiful bank (*pulchrum littus*) upon the shore of the river which lies at the foot of this hill. It was here that the Roman orators walked in going to the Forum; it was here that Cæsar and Pompey met as private citizens, and endeavoured to gain over Cicero to their party, whose independant eloquence was of more importance to them than the power of their armies.

* Vidimus flavum Tiberim, &c.

Poetry also contributes to the embellishment of this scene: Virgil has placed upon the Aventine Hill the cavern of Cacus; and the Romans, so great in their history, are not less so in the heroic fictions with which their poets have adorned their fabulous origin.

Finally, in returning from the Aventine Hill, we observe the house of Nicolas Rienzi, who in vain endeavoured, in modern times, to restore ancient manners; and this recollection, though feeble when contrasted with the others, engages the mind for a great length of time. Mount Celius is remarkable on account of its exhibiting the ruins of the Pretorian Camp, and those of the foreign soldiers. We meet with the following inscription on the ruins of the building constructed for the reception of these soldiers:— *To the guardian Deity of the Camp of Strangers.* In reality, the deity of those who supported their empire. The remains of these ancient barracks would incline us

to be of opinion that they were built after the manner of cloisters, or rather that cloisters were constructed upon their model.

The Esquiline Hill was called *the Hill of the Poets*, because Mécenas, having his palace upon it, Horace, Propertius, and Tibullus also fixed their habitations there. At no great distance from thence are the ruins of the hot baths of Titus and Trajan. It is believed that Raphael took the model of the Arabic ornaments in his paintings from the frescos in the hot baths of Titus. It was there, also, that the groupe of Laocoon was discovered. The coolness of water gives so much delight in a warm country, that they were fond of uniting every thing of pomp, luxury, and all the enjoyments of the imaginations, in the places where they took the refreshment of the bath. In these the Romans exhibited the *chefs-d'œuvre* of painting and of sculpture. They beheld them by the light of lamps; for it is evi-

dent from the construction of these mansions, that the light of day could not penetrate them, and by this means they defended themselves from the burning rays of the mid-day sun. It was, doubtless, on account of the painful sensations they excited that the ancients denominated them the darts of Apollo. Reflecting upon the extreme precautions taken by the ancients against the heat would incline us to believe that the climate was formerly more torrid than it is in our own times. It was in the hot baths of Caracalla that the Hercules Farnese, the Flora, and the groupe of Dircé were placed. Near Ostia, in the baths of Nero, was found the Apollo Belvidere. Is it possible to conceive, that, admiring this noble statue, Nero never felt some generous emotions !

The hot baths and circuses are the only descriptions of buildings, dedicated to public amusements, of which any traces re-

main at Rome. There is not a vestige of any other theatre but that of Marcellus, some ruins of which yet escape the hand of time. Pliny informs us that he has seen three hundred and sixty marble columns, and three thousand statues in a theatre erected to endure only for a few days. Sometimes the Romans raised edifices so solid as to resist even the effects of earthquakes ; sometimes they were pleased to lavish immense labours upon buildings which they destroyed themselves when the games, for which they were erected, finished : thus they enjoyed the passing time in every form. The Romans did not, like the Greeks, entertain the taste for dramatic performances ; the fine arts did not flourish at Rome, but from the works and by the artists of Greece, and the Roman grandeur evinced itself more in colossal magnificence of architecture than in the grand works of imagination. This gigantic luxury, these wonders of wealth, have a splendid character of dig-

nity ; if they do not so much give an idea of liberty, they, at least, give impressions of power. The monuments dedicated as public baths might be called provinces ; in them were congregated all the different productions and the various establishments of an entire country. The Circus, (called *Circus Maximus*) of which some remains are still visible, adjoins so nearly the palace of the Cæsars, that Nero, from the windows of his palace, could give the signal for the games. It was so immense a structure as to contain three hundred thousand persons. Almost the whole nation was entertained at the same moment ; these grand fêtes might be considered as a sort of popular institution, which united all men in the bond of pleasure, as they sometimes did in that of glory.

The Quirinal and Viminal Hills are so near to each other, that it is difficult to distinguish them ; it was there that the

houses of Sallust and Pompey stood ; it is also on this spot that the Pope has fixed his place of abode. One cannot be in Rome without contrasting the present with the past, and the change is very striking. But we learn to behold with composure the events of our own times, in contemplating the perpetual transient nature of the history of men ; and to feel a kind of disdain at being agitated in the presence of so many ages, which have overturned the most stable designs of former generations.

Beside the Seven Hills, on their slopes, and on their summits, we see numbers of steeples, and obelisks ; Trajan's Pillar, Antonine's Column, the tower of Conti, whence they pretend that Nero contemplated the conflagration of Rome, and the Cupola of St. Peter which rises in majesty above all the others. It appears as if the air was peopled by all these monuments which aspire to the heavens, and that an

aerial city hovered with majesty over the city of the earth.

In returning to Rome, Corinna conducted Oswald under the portico of Octavia, of that woman who possessed a soul so amiable, and suffered so greatly; then they traversed that accursed road (the *via scelerata*) by which the infamous Tullia had passed trampling the body of her father under her horses' feet; they saw at a distance the temple raised by Agrippina in honor of Claudius, whom she had poisoned; and, lastly, they passed before the tomb of Augustus, the interior enclosure of which is now converted into an amphitheatre for the combats of wild beasts.

"I have made you," said Corinna to Lord Nelvil, "travel with rapidity over some of the remains of ancient history; but you may comprehend the pleasure which is to be found in those researches

connected with the age of learning and of poetry, which speak alike to the imagination and to the understanding. In Rome there are many distinguished men whose sole occupation is to discover a new connection between history and the ruins." "I do not know a study which would interest me more," replied Lord Nelvil, "if it were possible for me to be composed enough to enter upon it: this species of knowledge is much more animating than that which is acquired by reading. We might say, that we gave a second life to all that we discovered, and that the past re-appeared from under the dust where it had been buried."—"Doubtless," said Corinna; "and it is not a useless prepossession that inspires this admiration of ancient times. We live in an age when selfishness appears to be the sole principle which rules the actions of men; and what sympathy, what feeling, what enthusiasm, can ever result from self-love! It is most delight-

ful to meditate on those days of consecration, of sacrifice, and of heroism, which once were, and of which the earth still retains honourable traces.

CHAPTER VI.

CORINNA secretly flattered herself with having captivated the heart of Oswald ; but, as she knew his reserve and want of pliability, she durst not discover to him all the interest he had inspired, although she was inclined, from disposition, not to conceal any thing she felt. Perhaps she also believed, that in speaking on subjects unconnected with their sentiments, their voice possessed a tone which betrayed their mutual affection, and that a secret confession of love was painted in their eyes, and in that melancholy and concealed language which so deeply penetrates the soul.

One morning, when she had prepared herself to prosecute her walks with Os-

wald, she received a billet from him, couched in rather ceremonious terms, in which he informed her, that the ill state of his health would confine him to his apartment for some days. A sad inquietude took possession of the heart of Corinna; at first she dreaded that his disorder might be attended with danger; but the Count d'Erfeuil, whom she met in the evening, informed her, that it was one of those attacks of melancholy to which he was very subject, and during the continuance of which he would not see or converse with any one.—“Even I,” said the Count d'Erfeuil, “when he is in that state, am not allowed to see him.” This *even I* was disagreeable enough to Corinna; but she took good care that it should not appear to the only man who could give her intelligence respecting Lord Nelvil. She asked a number of questions, flattering herself that a man apparently so trifling in his manners would inform her of all he knew;

suddenly, whether from a wish to conceal, by an air of mystery, that Oswald had not confided any thing to him, or from a feeling that it was more honourable to refuse than give answers to these questions, he opposed an utter silence to the ardent curiosity of Corinna. She, who had ever maintained an ascendancy over those with whom she conversed, could not comprehend by what means her powers of persuasion were lost upon the Count d'Erfeuil; nor was she sensible that self-love is the most inflexible principle in the world.

What resource, then, was left to Corinna to attain a knowledge of what was passing in the heart of Oswald! to write to him? So much precaution is necessary in writing, and Corinna was by habit and nature frank and open. Three days had slipped away without her seeing Lord Nelvil, and the most dreadful agitation preyed upon her mind. "What then

have I done," said she, "that he should avoid me? I have never told him how much I loved him—I have not done him this injury, so terrible in England, in Italy so easily forgiven. Has he divined it? But why should he think so?"

Oswald kept at a distance from Corinna, because he perceived himself strongly fascinated by her charms. Although he had not given his promise to marry Lucilia Edgermond, he knew that it was the intention of his father to bestow her upon him as a wife, and it was his earnest desire to conform to his wishes. Finally, Corinna was not known to him under her real name, and had, for a number of years, spent a life rather too little under controul: a marriage of this description, Lord Nelvil was aware, would not meet the approbation of his father; and he clearly foresaw that this was not a step by which he could expiate his of-

fences against him. These were his motives for refraining from visiting Corinna. He had formed the design of writing to her on leaving Rome, to inform her what had led him to adopt this resolution ; but, as he was not aware of the power she exercised over him ; he prescribed to himself the resolution of not going near her, and this sacrifice, nevertheless, by the second day, appeared to him most painful.

Corinna was struck with the idea that Oswald would become quite indifferent to her, were he to go without bidding her adieu. She expected every instant to receive intelligence of his departure ; and her terrors on this account raised in her such a variety of emotions, that she found her soul, so occupied by this passion, by this vulture's claw, under the gripe of which happiness and independence vanished. Unable to rest at home, where Lord Nelvil never came, she sometimes wan-

dered in the gardens of Rome, in the hopes of meeting him there. The hours spent in wandering thus, with some chance of seeing him, were more supportable. The ardent imagination of Corinna was the source of this happy faculty; but, unfortunately for her, this imagination was interwoven with a natural sensibility, which often subjected her to a depression of spirits of the most distressing nature.

The evening of the fourth day of this painful absence was fine moon-light, and Rome is admirably pleasant during the silence of the night: it then appears as if only inhabited by its illustrious shades. Corinna, in returning from the house of one of her female friends, oppressed by grief, left her carriage, and reposed herself for some moments near the fountain of Trevi — this abundant spring, falls in a cascade to the center of Rome, and appears to be the soul of this calm retreat. When this cascade conti-

nnued dry for a few days it might be said that Rome was struck with stupor. It is the rumbling of carriages, that other cities have to listen to ; in Rome it is the murmuring of this immense fountain, which seems the necessary accompaniment to the pensive life led by its inhabitants. The image of Corinna was clearly reflected in this spring, which has for many ages borne the name of *L'eau Virginate* ; Oswald, who a few moments after stopped at the same spot, perceived the charming features of his friend reflected from the water. He was seized with an emotion so powerful, that he did not, at first, know whether his imagination had not deceived him with the shadow of Corinna, as it had so frequently done with that of his father ; he turned again to the fountain, to be convinced by a more distinct view, and the individual features of Corinna were reflected to his sight. She recognized him, uttered a cry, rushed quickly forward, and

grasped his arm, as if she was afraid, he would again escape her, but, suddenly recovering herself from this too impetuous movement, she blushed in calling to mind the disposition of Lord Nelvil, and that she had discovered to him so forcibly what her feelings were, and dropping the hand which Oswald held, she covered her face with the other, to conceal her tears.

“Corinna,” said Oswald, “my dear Corinna, has then my absence made you unhappy?” “Oh, yes,” she replied, “and you must surely have been so too! Why then do me an injury? Have I deserved to suffer at your hands?” “No,” exclaimed Lord Nelvil—“no, undoubtedly not. But if I do not feel myself at liberty, if I feel nothing in my breast but commotion and regret, why shall I make you a partner in this torment of feelings and of apprehensions?” “Why?—this is no time,” interrupted,

Corinna, "this is no time, grief already fills my bosom, spare me!" "You, in grief," replied Oswald; "is it possible in the midst of a career so brilliant, so successful; with an imagination so lively?" "Stop," said Corinna, "you do not know me; of all my qualities the strongest is that of being able to suffer. I was born for happiness, my temperament is sanguine, my imagination is warm; but pain excites in me, I cannot describe what impatience; enough to drive reason from her throne, or consign me to the grave. I again repeat it to you, spare me; my gaiety, my versatility are only of value to me with regard to outward appearance; but there exists in my soul a source of woe, which neither can preserve nor defend me from the effects of love."

Corinna pronounced these words with an expression that produced in Oswald the strongest emotions. "Doubt not,

Corinna," said he, "but I shall visit you again to morrow morning." "I conjure you," she cried with an emotion she in vain attempted to conceal—"yes, I intreat you, Lord Nelvil;" and he disappeared.

BOOK V.

THE TOMBS, THE CHURCHES, AND THE
PALACES.

CHAPTER I.

THE next day, Oswald and Corinna were mutually embarrassed on meeting. Corinna had no longer confidence in the love she had inspired.—Oswald was discontented with himself: he discovered in his character a species of weakness which sometimes revolted against his better judgment, as against tyranny, and all that was sought by both was to avoid speaking on the subject of their mutual affection. “I propose to you to-day,” said Corinna, “a solemn tour, but which will surely be a very interesting one. Le

us visit the tombs—let us contemplate the last asylum of those who lived among the monuments, the ruins of which we have beheld.”—“ Yes,” replied Oswald, “ you have struck on a plan, which well accords with the present state of my mind;” and he pronounced these words with an accent so melancholy, that it was some moments before Corinna could summon up resolution enough to address him. But taking courage from the desire to relieve Oswald from his painful feelings, in turning his mind towards the objects they were going to visit, she said to him, “ You know, my lord, that so far were the ancients from thinking that the sight of tombs dispirited the living, they believed it inspired an extraordinary emulation, and erected the tombs upon the public roads, for this purpose, that the rising generation, having the memory of illustrious men recalled to their mind, might be invited from the silent grave to emulate their glorious deeds.”—“ Ah!

how I envy," said Oswald, sighing deeply, "how I envy all those whose recollections are not mingled with remorse of conscience!"—"You—remorse!" cried Corinna, "you! ah! I am sure that in your soul nothing resides but virtue the most elevated—honour the most refined—delicacy the most exalted"——"Corinna! Corinna! touch not on this subject," interrupted Oswald; "in your happy country the sombre ideas are dissipated by the clearness of the atmosphere; but grief which has once found its way to the bottom of our distempered souls, only terminates with our existence."—"You have formed a wrong opinion of me," replied Corinna; "I have already told you, that although my mind was formed to enter warmly into the happiness of those who rejoice, I should suffer more than you if——" she left the sentence unfinished, and changed the discourse.—"My only desire, my lord," continued she, "is to entertain you for a

moment; I hope for nothing more.”—The sweetness of this answer touched Lord Nelvil; and perceiving an expression of sadness in the countenance of Corinna, naturally so marked with interest and spirit, he reproached himself with being the cause of melancholy in one born for impressions of gaiety and good humour; he determined to rally his spirits. But the anxiety which preyed on Corinna with respect to the designs of Oswald, and the possibility of his departure, entirely destroyed her accustomed serenity.

She conducted Lord Nelvil out of the gates of the city upon the ancient remains of the Appian Way. These remains are marked, in the middle of the *Campagna di Roma*, by tombs on the right hand and on the left, the ruins of which extend beyond the reach of the eye many miles on the other side of the wall. The Romans never allowed the

dead to be buried in the interior of the city; the tombs of their emperors alone were admitted to that distinction.—However, an humble citizen, named Publius Bibulus, obtained this favour, as a reward for his private virtues.—His cotemporaries, indeed, paid more willing honor to this than to all the others.

In passing to the Appian Way, we go by the gate of St. Sebastian, formerly called *Capene*:—Cicero informs us, that in going by this gate, the tombs which first attract our observation are those of Metellus, of the Scipios, and of Servilius.—The tomb of the family of the Scipios has been found in this identical place, and since transported to the Vatican. It is almost a sacrilege to disturb the ashes of the dead, and deface the ruins:—the imagination is more intimately connected with the morals than we suppose—it must not be offended.—Among so many tombs which demand

attention, they adjudge the names at random, without being able to ascertain whether or not they are correct ; but even this uncertainty inspires an emotion which forbids us to look with indifference on these monuments. It is in some of these that the houses of peasants are erected ; for the Romans consecrated a vast space, and edifices equally magnificent, to the funeral urns of their friends, or illustrious fellow-citizens.— They did not regard that barren principle of utility which fertilizes some corners of the earth, in seizing from sterility the extended domain of sentiment and fancy.

We perceive at some distance on the Appian Way, a temple dedicated by the Republic to Honor and Virtue ; another to the God who forced Hannibal to retreat ; also the fountain of Egeria, where Numa consulted the immortal spirits of good men, and communed with conscience

in solitude. — It appears as if around these tombs the traces of virtue only are in being—no monument of the ages of vice finds a place beside that earth where these illustrious dead are laid ; they are surrounded by an honorable space, where the most noble recollections may be indulged in, without encountering any thing offensive.

The appearance of the country about Rome is very singular ; in truth it is a desert, for there is neither the vestige of a tree nor house ; but the soil is covered with natural plants, which the vigour of the vegetation renews unceasingly.— These creeping plants insinuate themselves into the tombs, adorn the ruins, and seem to flourish there only in honor of the dead. One would affirm that haughty nature had repelled all the labours of man since the day that Cincinnatus ceased to guide the plough which furrowed her bosom ; she produces

vegetation at random, without allowing mortals to enrich themselves from her wealth. These uncultivated plains may be unpleasing to agriculturists, to legislators, and to all those who cultivate the earth with the view of providing for the wants of mankind; but the contemplative mind, which is as much delighted by reflections upon the dead as upon the the living, dwells with pleasure upon this country, where modern time has not imprinted a single trace,—this earth which embosoms the dead, and robes their remains with wild flowers and plants, which creep along the soil, and never rise so high as to become separated from the ashes which they have the appearance of cherishing.

Oswald was convinced, that in this place it was possible to enjoy more tranquillity than in any other. The soul is not so much afflicted by the images which grief intrudes upon it; it seems as if

we again participated with those who no longer enjoy the fineness of this clime, of this sun, and of this verdant earth.—Corinna observed the impression it made on Lord Nelvil, and she then allowed herself to form some flattering hopes; she could not indulge in the idea of being able altogether to console Oswald, or accomplish her earnest desire, of effacing from his heart the just regrets which the loss of his father inspired; but even in the sentiment of regret there is something so sweet and agreeable, which it is impossible to make those sensible of that have not experienced, that sorrows are the only real blessings which they can call their own.

“Let us stop here,” said Corinna, “in front of this tomb, the only one which still remains almost entire; this is not the tomb of a renowned Roman, it is that of Cecilia Metella, a young woman to whom her father raised this

monument.”—“ Happy,” said Oswald, “ happy the children who die in the arms of their fathers, and meet death in the same bosom which gave them life ; even death has lost his sting for them.”—“ Yes,” replied Corinna, with emotion, “ happy are those who are not left orphans!—See, they have sculptured arms upon this tomb, although it belongs to a female ; but the daughters of heroes were permitted to bear upon their tombs the trophies of their fathers :—innocence and valour form a delightful union!—There is an elegy of Propertius, which depicts better than any other of antiquity, this dignity of women among the Romans, more grand and more pure than even what she enjoyed in the age of chivalry. Cornelia, who died young, addressed to her husband a farewell and consolations the most affecting, and in which we find almost every thing that is worthy or sacred in the union of a family.—The noble pride of a blameless

life is described in this majestic Latin poetry, in this poetry as grand and regular as the masters of the world.—
‘ Yes,’ said Cornelia, ‘ *no crime has sullied my life from the day of my marriage to that of my death—I have lived in purity between the two torches.*’ (13)——
“ What an admirable sentence !” exclaimed Corinna, “ what a sublime image ! and how worthy of envy is the lot of that female who could thus preserve the most perfect unity in her fate, and carry the recollection of it to the grave ! this is enough to live for !”

In concluding these words, the eyes of Corinna became filled with tears—a cruel idea, a blameable suspicion invaded the heart of Oswald. “ Corinna !” cried he, “ Corinna, has your refined soul any thing to reproach itself with ? Was I at my own disposal, was it possible for me to offer myself to you, should not I meet with rivals in the time that is past ?

Could I be justly proud of my choice? Would not a destructive jealousy corrode my happiness?" "I am at liberty, and I love you as I have ever loved you," replied Corinna, "what would you more? Must I be condemned to confess to you, that before you were known to me, my imagination has been so powerful as to deceive me in the cause of what it inspired me! And is there not in the heart of man a spark of divine pity for the errors which feeling, or at any rate, the illusion of feeling, has led to the commission of?" As she finished these words, a modest blush suffused her countenance. Oswald started, but did not utter a sound. In the looks of Corinna was an expression of repentance and of fear, which forbade his judging severely, and it appeared to him as if a ray of heaven descended upon her to absolve her.—He took her hand, placed it upon his heart, and threw himself upon his knees before her without uttering a word, with-

out pronouncing any thing, but gazing upon her with a look of love which had abandoned every hope.

“ Be advised by me,” said Corinna to Lord Nelvil, “ do not form plans for the years that are to come. The most happy moments of our lives are those which bountiful chance bestows. Is it here, then, is it in the midst of tombs that we must think for the future ?”——“ No !” exclaimed Lord Nelvil, “ No ! I think not of the future which should divide us ! These four days of absence have convinced me too well that I now exist but through you.” Corinna made no answer to these pleasing words, but she received them religiously into her heart ; she was always fearful in prolonging the conversation upon the idea which alone occupied him, to excite Oswald to declare his designs, before a more confirmed habit had made a separation impossible to him. With

this design, she frequently turned his attention to exterior objects, like the sultana in the Arabian Tales, who sought by a thousand different stories, to captivate the attention of him she loved, on purpose to avoid the decision of her fate, at the moment when the charms of her vivacity had borne away the victory.

CHAPTER II.

NOT far from the Appian Way, Oswald and Corinna saw the Columbarium, where slaves are united with their masters, where is to be seen in the same tomb all those who lived under the patronage of one man or woman. The wives of Livy, for example; those who, consecrated of old to the preservation of beauty, struggled against time, and disputed with age every one of their charms, are placed side by side in little urns. One ponders at the sight of an assemblage of obscure dead around one of illustrious name, no less silent than his attendants. At a short distance from hence, is seen the field where the vestals, faithless to their vows, were buried alive;

a remarkable example of fanaticism in a religion naturally tolerant.

“ I shall not lead you to the catacombs,” said Corinna to Lord Nelvil, “ though by a strange chance they are situated under this Appian Way, and tombs are by this means inhabited under tombs. But this asylum of the persecuted Christians possesses something so gloomy and terrific, that I cannot bring myself to visit it a second time ; there is not in it that affecting melancholy which inspires us in these open places—it is nearly a sepulchral dungeon—it is the punishment of being alive, and surrounded by the horrors of death. Doubtless we feel ourselves penetrated with admiration at those men who, supported by enthusiasm alone, were able to endure this subterraneous existence, and were alike utterly deprived of the light of day and the face of nature ; but the mind is so ill at ease in this place, that no good can result

from going thither. Man is a part of creation, he must find his share of moral harmony in the universe taken altogether, in the necessary order of destiny; and certain violent and dreadful exceptions may astonish the mind, but so terrifies the imagination that the usual disposition of the soul cannot comprehend them. Rather come," continued Corinna, "let us see the pyramid of Cestius; the protestants who die here are all buried around this pyramid, and it is a sweet asylum, tolerant and liberal."—"Yes," replied Oswald, "it is there that many of my countrymen have found their last abode. Let us go there; perhaps it may be so to me, if I should never leave you." Corinna trembled at these words, and her hand shook as she rested it upon the arm of Lord Nelvil. "I am better," said he, "much better since I knew you," and the countenance of Corinna, again brightened with a sweet and tender joy, resumed its usual expression.

Cestius presided over the games of the Romans: his name has found no place in history, but he is rendered famous by his tomb. The massy pyramid which incloses his remains protects his death from that oblivion which has utterly effaced all traces of his life. Aurelian, fearing that this pyramid might be converted into a position from whence Rome could be attacked, had it inclosed within the walls, which still remain, not as useless ruins, but the actual inclosures of modern Rome. It is said that pyramids imitate in their form the flame which rises from a funeral pile. One thing is certain, that this mysterious form attracts the attention, and gives a picturesque appearance to all the points of view of which it forms a part. In front of this pyramid is the Testacian Mount, under which there were grottos of the most refreshing coolness, where summer banquets were given. The entertainments at Rome were not hurt by a view

of the tombs. The pines and cypresses, which we see from space to space in the pleasant country of Italy, also recal these solemn recollections; and this contrast produces an effect similar to the verse of Horace :—

—————Moriture Delli

— — — — —

Linquenda tellus, et domus, et placens

Uxor*———

In the midst of poetry, consecrated to every earthly delight, the ancients always felt in the idea of death this enjoyment; love and conviviality recalled it, and a joyous emotion was the consequence, from the very recollection of the shortness of life.

Corinna and Lord Nelvil returned from the route of the tombs in traversing the banks of the Tiber. Of old it was

* Dellius must die—————

And leave his fields, his home, and charming spouse.

covered with ships, and bordered with palaces ;—of old even its overflowing was regarded as ominous : this was the prophetic stream, the tutelary deity of Rome ; (14) now one would say, that it glides among shades, so solitary it is, so livid do its waters appear ! The most beautiful monuments of the arts, the most admirable statues have been thrown into the Tiber, and are hid beneath its waves. Who knows, if, in order to search, we might not turn it one day from its bed ? but when we consider that the chefs-d'œuvre of mankind are perhaps there in our presence, and that a more penetrating eye can see them through the waters, we experience an indescribable emotion, which reigns incessantly at Rome, under various forms, and produces a society of ideas in physical objects, which are mute every where else.

CHAP. III.

RAPHAEL has said; that modern Rome was almost entirely built with the ruins of the ancient city; and, it is certain, that we cannot take a single step, without stumbling upon some remains of antiquity. We perceive the *eternal walls*, as Pliny expresses it, through the works of the latter ages; almost all the edifices at Rome bear historical traces; we may see in them, as it were, the phisiognomy of past ages. From the time of the Etruscans, to our days, from these people, more ancient than the Romans themselves, and who resembled the Egyptians by the solidity of their labours, and the intricacy of their designs, from this people to the Chevalier Bernini, that mannered artist, like all the Italian poets of the 17th cen-

tury, we may observe the human mind at Rome, in the different characters of the arts, the edifices, and the ruins. The middle age, and the brilliant days of the Medicis, re-appear to our eyes in their works, and this study of the past in objects present before our eyes, penetrates us with the genius of the time. It has been thought, that Rome had formerly something mysterious even in its name, which was known only to the adepts ; it would seem that it is still necessary to be initiated in the secret of this city. It is not merely an assemblage of habitations ; it is in fact, the history of the world, figured by various emblems, and represented in various forms.

Corinna agreed with Lord Nelvil, that they should first visit the edifices of modern Rome, and that they should reserve, for another occasion, the admirable collection of pictures and statues it contains. Perhaps, without knowing why, Corinna

desired to postpone, as long as possible, visiting what is indispensable to be seen at Rome: for who ever quitted it, without having contemplated the Belvidere, Apollo, and the pictures of Raphael! This precaution, feeble as it was, and in which Oswald did not as yet participate, pleased her imagination; was there not an audacity in wishing to retain the person we love, by any other motive than that of sentiment? I do not know how it is, but the more we are in love, the less we trust to the sentiment which inspires it; and, whatever may be the cause, which ensures to us the company of the beloved object, we always seize upon it with joy. There is often a great deal of vanity in a certain kind of audacity; and if charms generally admired, as were those of Corinna, have a real advantage, it is because they admit of placing the pride of them in the sentiment we feel, much more than on that which we inspire.

Corinna and Lord Nelvil began their visits with the most remarkable among the numerous churches of Rome; they are all decorated with the spoils of ancient magnificence; but something dismal and perplexing is mingled with these fine marbles and festive ornaments carried off from the Pagan temples. Porphyry and granite columns are so numerous in Rome, that they are lavished on every building around us, without any value being attached to them. At St. John Lateran, the church so famous on account of councils which were held in it, there is found so great a quantity of marble columns, that several of them are covered with plaister, in order to vary their colours and forms; so much has the multitude of these treasures rendered them indifferent!

Some of these columns were in the tomb of Adrian, others in the Capitol; the latter still bear upon their capitals

the figures of the geese which saved the Roman people ; these columns have Gothic ornaments, and some Arabic ornaments upon them. The urn of Agrippa contains the ashes of a pope, for even the dead themselves have given up their place to others, and the tombs in Rome have changed masters, almost as often as the residence of the living.

Near St. John Lateran is the holy staircase, transported as they say from Jerusalem to Rome. We can only mount it upon our knees. Cæsar himself and Claudius, also mounted upon their knees, the staircase which led to the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus. Beside St. John Lateran is the font, where it is said, that Constantine was baptized. In the midst of the square we see a monument, which is perhaps the most ancient monument in the world. It is an obelisk cotemporary with the Trojan war ! An obelisk which Cambyzes the barbarian respected

sufficiently to stop the conflagration of a city, in honour of it! An obelisk, for which a king gave the life of his only son as a pledge. The Romans transported it from the heart of Egypt into Italy, in a most miraculous manner; they turned the Nile from its bed, in order that they might transport this obelisk more conveniently to the sea: it is also covered with hieroglyphics, which have retained their secret for so many ages, and even to this day defy the most learned researches. The Indians, Egyptians, and the antiquity of antiquity itself, might be perhaps revealed by these signs. The wonderful charm of Rome does not so much exist in the real beauty of its monuments, but in the interest they inspire, by exciting a train of thinking; and this kind of interest increases every day by each new study.

One of the most singular churches in Rome, is that of St. Paul: its exterior

resembles that of an ill-built barn, and the interior is adorned with twenty-four columns of marble, so beautiful, and of a form so perfect, that it has been thought they belonged to a temple at Athens, described by Pausanias. Cicero says:—*We are surrounded with vestiges of history.* If he said so at that time, what would he say now?

The columns, the statues, the bas-reliefs of ancient Rome, are so numerous in the churches of the modern city, that there is one of them. (St. Agnes) where bas-reliefs turned upside down are used for the steps of a staircase, without the trouble of having been ever taken to enquire what they represent. What an astonishing sight would ancient Rome now present, if the columns, the marbles, and the statues had been left on the spots where they were found! The ancient city would be almost entirely still

standing, but would people venture to walk among the ruins ?

The palaces of the great lords are very extensive, and frequently of very beautiful, but always of an imposing architecture ; the ornaments of the interior, however, are rarely of a good taste, and we have no idea of the elegant apartments which the improved enjoyments of social life have caused to be invented in other countries. The vast mansions of the Roman princes are deserted and lonely ; the idle and luxurious inhabitants of these superb palaces retire to some small dark corner of them, and allow strangers to stroll freely through their magnificent galleries, which contain some of the finest pictures of the age of Leo X. These great Roman lords are equally strangers to the pompous luxury of their ancestors, as much as these very ancestors were strangers to the austere virtues of the Roman repub-

lic. Their country houses still more forcibly present the idea of that solitude, and of that indifference of their possessors, in the midst of the most enviable residences in the world. We may walk through these immense gardens, without knowing that they have a master. Grass grows in the midst of the walks, and in the same abandoned alleys, the trees are cut according to the old taste which reigned in France. But we are often surprised at Rome, and in most of the other cities of Italy, at the taste which the Italians have for stiff and awkward ornaments, when we reflect that they constantly have before their eyes, the noble simplicity of the antique. They love what is brilliant, far better than that which is elegant and commodious. They possess in every respect, the advantages and inconveniences of not living habitually in society. Their luxury is rather addressed to the imagination, than to the enjoyment; de-

solated as they are among themselves, they cannot dread the spirit of sarcasm, which rarely penetrates into domestic secrets at Rome; and, it may be frequently said, upon observing the contrast between the inside and outside of their palaces, that most of the great Italian lords arrange their houses so as to dazzle the eyes of passing strangers, but not to receive their friends in them.

After having visited the churches and palaces, Corinna conducted Oswald to the Villa Mellini, a solitary garden, and without any other ornament than magnificent trees. We may see from this place, the Appenines at a distance; the transparency of the atmosphere colours these mountains, concentrates them, and paints them in a manner singularly picturesque. Oswald and Corinna remained in this place some time, in order to enjoy the charms of the atmosphere, and the tranquillity of nature.

No person can have an idea of this singular tranquillity, unless they have lived in southern climates. We do not feel, in a hot day, the slightest breath of wind. The most slender stalks of grass are perfectly immovable; the animals themselves partake of the indolence inspired by the fine weather. In the south we do not hear the chirping of grasshoppers, nor the whistling of birds; nothing fatigues us with useless and transitory emotions:—all is a sleep until the moment, when a storm or the passion awakens that vehement nature, who then rises with impetuosity from her profound repose.

There are in the gardens at Rome, a great number of trees always green which also add to the illusion made by the mildness of the climate during winter. Pines of a peculiar elegance of appearance, large and brushy towards the top and close together, form as it were a kind

of plain in the air ; the effect of which is delightful, when we mount high enough in order to view it. The lower trees are placed beyond this vault of verdure. Two palm trees only are to be seen at Rome, and both are in the gardens of some monks : one of them, placed upon a height, serves as a point of view in the distance, and we have always a sentiment of pleasure, on perceiving and retracing, in the various perspectives to be seen at Rome, this deputy from Africa, this image of a climate still more sultry than that of Italy, and which awakens so many new sensations and ideas.

“ Do you not find,” said Corinna, on contemplating, with Oswald, the country which surrounded them, “ that nature in Italy, excites much more reverie than any where else ? We may say, that she is here more intimately connected with man, and that the creator

makes use of her, as a language between his creature and himself." "Without doubt," replied Oswald, "I think so also; but, who knows if it is not the profound tenderness which you excite in my heart, which makes me sensible to all I see? You reveal to me the thoughts and emotions which external objects may excite. I live in my own heart; only you have awakened my imagination. But this magic of the universe, which you teach me to know, will never present any thing to me finer than your looks, or any thing more melting than your voice." "May this sentiment," said Corinna, "with which I now inspire you, last as long as I live; or at least, may my life not continue longer than it."

Oswald and Corinna finished their tour of Rome, by the Borghese villa; being that of all the Roman palace and gardens, where the splendors of nature and the arts, are collected with the greatest

taste and effect. We there see trees of all descriptions, and most magnificent fountains. An incredible collection of statues, vases, and antique sarcophagi, are mingled with the coolness of the renovating breezes of the south. The mythology of the ancients here seems re-animated. The Naiads are placed upon the shores of the waters, the Nymphs are stationed in woods, which are worthy of them, the tombs are placed under the Elysian shades, the statue of Esculapius is in the middle of an island, and that of Venus seems to rise from the waves: Ovid and Virgil might walk in this place, and think themselves still in the Augustan age. The chefs-d'œuvre which the palace contains, give it a magnificence always novel. We perceive at a distance through the trees, the city of Rome, and St. Peter's, the plains, and the long arcades, with the ruins of the aqueducts, which brought the water from the mountains into ancient Rome. Every thing is

adapted to the imagination, and to meditation. The finest sensations are confounded with the pleasures of the soul, and give the idea of a perfect happiness; but when we ask, why this ravishing residence is not inhabited? we are answered, that the badness of the air hinders it from being inhabited in summer.

This bad air is, as it were, besieging Rome; it advances some paces farther every year, and they are forced to abandon the most charming residences to its empire: without doubt, the absence of trees in the plains round the city, is one of the causes of it, and this is perhaps the reason why the ancient Romans consecrated the woods to goddesses, in order to make them be respected by the people. But numerous forests have been cut down; is it possible that in our days, there could exist places so much sanctified, as that avarice should abstain from destroying them? This bad air is the

plague of the inhabitants of Rome, and threatens the city with an entire depopulation; but it adds, perhaps, also to the effect produced by the superb gardens contained in Rome. This malignant influence is not felt by any external sign; you breathe an air, which is pure and very agreeable; the earth is smiling and fertile; a delicious coolness succeeds in the evening to the scorching heat of the day; but all this is death! "I love," said Oswald to Corinna, "this mysterious invisible danger, this danger in the form of the mildest impressions. If death is nothing else, as I think, than a call to a happier existence, why should not the perfume of flowers, the shade of beautiful trees, and the cooling breath of the evening, be charged with bringing us the news? Without doubt, the government should watch over the preservation of the human life, but nature has secrets, which the imagination alone can penetrate; and I can easily conceive,

that neither the inhabitants nor strangers are disgusted with Rome, on account of the dangers they are subject to in the finest seasons of the year."

BOOK VI.

THE MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF THE ITALIANS.

CHAPTER I.

THE irresolution of Oswald's character was increased by his misfortunes. He had never even ventured to ask Corinna the secret of her name and her destiny, and yet his love for her acquired every day new strength; he never regarded her without emotion; he could scarcely in the midst of society remove even for a moment, from the place where she sat; she never spoke a single word which he did not feel; she had not a moment of sadness, or of gaiety, the reflection of which was not painted upon his

own physiognomy. But admiring and loving Corinna as he did, he recollected how little such a female agreed with the manner of living in England, how much she differed from the idea which his father had formed of her, whom he wished him to marry, and what he said to Corinna arose from the trouble and the restraint, which these reflections gave rise to in him.

Corinna perceived it but too plainly; but it would have cost her so much to break with Lord Nelvil, that she gave herself up to the delusive hope, that he preferred her to all others; and, as she had a considerable degree of want of foresight in her character, she was happy with the present whatever it was, although it was impossible to know what might happen in future.

She separated herself entirely from the world, in order to devote herself to her

sentiment for Oswald. But at last, grieved at his silence, as to their future line of conduct, she resolved to accept an invitation to a ball, to which he was strongly pressed. Nothing is more easy than at Rome, to quit society, and re-appear in it alternately, as is most agreeable: it is the country of all others, where there is the least inquisitiveness into other people's secrets: every one does what he pleases, at least he does not meet with an obstacle to his love or ambition in the person of any one else. The Romans give themselves as little trouble with the conduct of their countrymen, as with that of foreigners who pass and repass through their city. When Lord Nelvil knew that Corinna was going to the ball, he felt chagrined. He thought he had for some time discovered in her a melancholy disposition, which sympathized with his own; suddenly she appeared to him to be occupied with dancing, that art in which

she excelled, and her imagination seemed animated by the prospect of an entertainment. Corinna was by no means of a frivolous disposition; but she felt herself every day more subjugated by her love for Oswald, and she was anxious to endeavour to weaken its force. She knew from experience, that reflection and sacrifices have less power than dissipation has over ardent temperaments, and she thought that reason did not consist in triumphing over one's-self, according to certain rules, but merely as well as we are able.

“ I must,” said she to Lord Nelvil, who reproached her with this intention, “ I must at all events know if there is no person else than you in the world, who can occupy my attention; if that which formerly pleased me cannot still amuse me, and if the sentiment with which you have inspired me, should absorb every other interest, and every other idea.”

“Do you wish then to cease to love me?” replied Oswald—“No,” said Corinna, “but it is only in domestic life that it can be pleasant to feel one’s self thus ruled over by a single affection. To me, who have need of my talents, of my mind, and of my imagination, to sustain the brilliancy of the life I have adopted, it certainly does harm, much harm to love as I do you. You will not sacrifice to me these homages, that glory.—What signifies it, that you should know if I sacrifice them to you! Since we are not destined for each other, we must not tarnish for ever that kind of happiness with which I am satisfied.” Lord Nelvil made no answer, because, in expressing his sentiments, he must have told, what design these sentiments inspired him with, and his heart was as yet ignorant of it. He was silent, therefore, and sighing, he followed Corinna to the ball, although it cost him much to do so.

It was the first time, since his misfortune, that he had visited a large company; and the tumult of a festival caused in him such an impression of sadness, that he remained a long time in a room, on one side of the ball-room, with his head resting upon his hand, and not even endeavouring to look at Corinna in the dance. He listened to the music of the dancing, which, like all other music, excites a reverie, although it seems destined to inspire joy only; the Count d'Erfeuil arrived, he was perfectly enchanted with the ball—a numerous assemblage of company, such, as in some degree, resembled the scenes he was accustomed to in France. “I have endeavoured,” said he to Lord Nelvil, “to find something interesting in these ruins of which they speak so much at Rome. For my part, I see nothing of the kind in them. It is only prejudice to admire a parcel of ruins covered with weeds and briars. I shall give my opinion freely on those heads, when I arrive at Paris, for it

is high time these ridiculous notions respecting Italy should cease to exist.—There is not a perfect monument of antiquity at this moment in Europe, but what is more worthy our admiration than these shafts of columns and bas-reliefs blackened and corroded by age, which it requires an infinitude of pedantic learning even to understand. A pleasure which, purchased at the expence of such time and trouble, does not appear to me to be very desirable. Now, in order to be enchanted with the opera at Paris, it is not necessary for one to grow pale by pouring over books.” Lord Nelvil made no answer. The Count again enquired respecting his opinion of the antiquities of Rome. Oswald observed, that in the place they were, interesting subjects could not be discussed, and that in question should be seriously considered.—“ Good !” rejoined the Count. “ I acknowledge I am gayer than you ; but who can tell if I be not wiser at the same

time ? Believe me, there is much practical philosophy in my spirits, and gaiety ; and by that rule, the blessings of life ought to be estimated." " Possibly you are right," answered Oswald, " but it is physically, and not morally, that you are so, and therefore, your mode of life is the more appropriate to you !"

The Count d'Erfeuil heard that Corinna was in the dancing-room ; he hastened thither. Lord Nelvil also went ; he saw the Prince d'Amalfi, a Neapolitan, possessed of a fine figure, just leading Corinna to join with him in the *Tarantula* dance ; a dance peculiar to the region of Naples, full of grace and originality. Her friends also wished her to dance it. She accepted the Prince's proposal without hesitation. This rather surprised the Count, who was accustomed, on such occasions, to meet with refusal, or a degree of hesitation in compliance. But in Italy, such affected graces are

unknown; they regard it as more pleasing and more advantageous to society, to do without apparent reluctance, that which is properly requested. Corinna, in fact, would have suggested such a natural mode of proceeding, were it not already established by custom. The style in which she had dressed herself for the occasion, was elegant and light. Her hair encircled by a fillet of the finest Italian silk, and her eyes were expressive of a lively pleasure which rendered their glances more affecting than ever. Oswald was unhappy at the passing scene. He felt indignant at a captivation, which he ought really to deplore; so far from being desirous to please him, it was rather with a contrary view, that Corinna then was pleased to appear so lovely. When she met Lord Nelvil's eyes, she coloured—and her's, at the moment, were inexpressibly enchanting.

The Prince d'Amalfi accompanied the

dance with castanetts. Corinna, before she began, made her obeisance to the assembly in the most elegant and graceful manner. She then took the tambourine, which the Prince presented to her ; and commenced the dance, striking the tambour at proper intervals—all her motions shewed agility and grace, with a union of apparent timidity and voluptuous forwardness, which pourtrayed to the imagination, the irresistible power of the Bayaderes in India, when they blend poetic recitation with their fascinating movements—when they express the most affecting sentiments by the appropriate refinement of their motions, occasionally heightened by dexterous exhibitions of exquisite pictures. Corinna perfectly understood all the various attitudes displayed in the works of the ancient masters, therefore, by a slight motion of the arms, either in elevating the tambourine above her head, while she ran through the bells with inconceivable dexterity—she pour-

trayed to the imagination, the dancers of Herculaneum, and exhibited a variety of novel attitudes, any of which would prove an exquisite model for a statuary or painter. (15)

The French dances, remarkable for the elegance and difficulty of the steps, possess not an equal talent for affecting the imagination and the sentiment. The character and genius of music was by turns expressed by the precision and softness of her motions. In her dancing, Corinna infused into the souls of those who beheld her, every thing she felt herself, as effectually as when she delivered an extempore effusion, as when she touched the lyre, or gave life to the canvas; all was *language* with her. The musicians in gazing on her, were the more deeply inspired by the genius of their art, and the degree of impassioned joy, and sensibility of imagination is indescribable that electrified all the spectators of this magic

dance, and seemed to transport them in to an ideal existence of happiness and delight which belongs not to this world.

There is a particular part of this Neapolitan dance, in which the female drops upon her knee, and the man turns upon her with the air of a conqueror—how charming, how dignified were the motions of Corinna on that occasion ! While kneeling *she* appeared a sovereign ! When she arose, and again made her instrument resound like an ethereal cymbal she seemed animated by the most lively enthusiasm, which combined with the effect of her youth and beauty, might induce a conviction of her being the happiest of mortals. But, alas ! it was far otherwise. However Oswald imagined her so, and while he admired her transcendent powers, sighed as feeling that her successful display of them removed her to a greater distance from himself. At the conclusion of the dance, the man falls on his knees in his turn, and the female dances

round him. Corinna, at that moment, surpassed herself, if such were possible—her course, in tripping through the circle two or three times, was so light and airy, that her buskined feet seemed to fly along the floor with the rapidity of lightning; and at the moment, she, with one hand, elevated the tambourine, and with the other motioned the Prince d'Amalfi to rise; every man near them was tempted by the general and enthusiastic admiration, to throw himself upon his knees also, with the exception of Lord Nelvil, who retired from the immediate scene, and the Count d'Erseuil who hastily advanced to compliment Corinna on her exquisite performance. As to the Italians, they calculate not what the effect or appearance of their enthusiastic emotions may be—they yield to its emotions, because it pervades them. They are not men sufficiently accustomed to society, nor are they ruled by that principle of self-love which

it evidently inculcates, to attend much to appearances ; and they never suffer considerations of vanity to abstract them from the enjoyment of their immediate pleasures.

Corinna was obviously pleased by her success, and she expressed her gratitude for the plaudits of the company in the most graceful and unaffected manner. Content with having succeeded, she quitted the spot, and made her way through the crowd to a distant door in the hall, near which Oswald happened to be solitarily seated—when she advanced near him, he requested her attention to a few words—“ Corinna,” said he, exerting himself at the same time to hide the poignancy of his affection—his mingled anxiety and delight — “ Corinna, reflect seriously upon your entire success, and the homage of universal admiration which it involves. But, are you certain, it secures to you a real and disinterest-

ed friend, among those myriads of adorers ; does it assure you a protector for life ? Is the vain tumult of momentary applause, sufficient to solace such a mind as yours ?”

CHAP. II.

THE quick passing of the company prevented Corinna from answering. They hastened to the supper tables, where each gallant cavalier assiduously placed himself at the side of his lady. A foreigner who was present had great difficulty in obtaining a place: no one, except Lord Nelvil and the Count d'Erfeuil, offered him his place;—this, however, should not be attributed to the want of a due sense of politeness, or to any motive of selfishness, but to the idea entertained by the great Roman nobility of a bounden duty neither to stir a step, nor to absent themselves an instant, in such a situation, from their respective ladies. Those for whom there is no room to sit down, take their stations behind the chairs, ready to

serve them on receiving the least sign. The ladies speak only to their cavaliers; strangers, therefore, endeavour in vain to find society on such occasions. The Italian ladies do not consider this conduct as a species of coquetry, and in their sentiment of the passion of love, feel no wish to please any but those on whom their affections are placed:—the heart, through the medium of love, is more vulnerable than through any other passion. Partialities or affections conceived at first sight, are often productive of the most sincere and long continued passion. Infidelity is more severely censured in a man than in the females. It frequently occurs that three or four men feel a passion, and pay their devoirs to the same woman: she suffers them to attend her, without even taking the trouble to mention their names to the master of the house who receives them. One of these is shortly preferred to the rest—a second is suffered to continue his assiduities—a third is called *il patito*,

i. e. one who is absolutely *disdained*; but he is still permitted to continue his adorations at an humble distance; and all the rivals live quietly together. The use of the poignard is now entirely banished to the lower orders of the people. There exists in Italy a strange and unaccountable mixture of simplicity and corruption—of dissimulation and candour—of good-nature and vindictiveness—of energy and feebleness, which constantly developè themselves in such a style and character, that the good qualities of the natives are generally attributed to vanity, while the unfavourable parts of their characters—while the bad ones, are supposed to arise from selfishness, whether it may refer to the gratification of appetite or passion, or to views of interest or ambition.

The distinctions of rank are not of corresponding effect in Italy. This consideration is by no means to be attributed

to the suggestions of philosophy, but to a facility of character, and a familiarity of manners, which submits not to the trammels of aristocratic prejudice, and as society or the public pretends to judge of nothing, association is nearly general.

When supper was ended, the company proceeded to play at different games.—Some of the ladies played at hazard, others at whist, where silence is so necessary, and not a word was to be heard in that spacious chamber, so noisy a few minutes before. The inhabitants of the south are susceptible of sudden transition from a great degree of agitation to the most profound repose. This is another contrariety of character, as is also a propensity to idleness, combined in the men with the most indefatigable perseverance, and which renders it proper not to judge of their characters at first sight, as they often unite the most opposite qualities in their general characters—if at one mo-

ment you perceive them cautious and unassuming, it is greatly to be feared, in the next, you will behold them daring and audacious,—they are indolent—that is, their abstaining from action is more with a view to act again with more vigour and effect:—by reposing, they lose none of their energy of spirit, but seem the while to model and increase it, so as the more effectually to grapple with great and decisive circumstances.

In this assembly, of which Oswald and Corinna formed a part, there were several who lost immense sums at play, without the least variation of countenance being perceptible; these very men would, however, display the most lively and impassioned gestures were they relating circumstances comparatively of no importance. But when the passions arrive at a certain degree of energy and violence, they are not clamorously displayed, but may be observed almost al-

ways by the rigid silence and gloomy demeanour of the person affected.

Lord Nelvil had formed the most interesting expectations from the scene of an Italian ball—he figured to himself the various modes of expressing a lively and enthusiastic admiration, which such an assemblage would display, and he was for some time detached from the interests of Corinna—he was seriously disappointed, but his pride and self-possession enabled him to conceal his chagrin. He was invited to join in playing, but he declined it, as also did Corinna, who motioned him to take a seat near her. Oswald was uneasy at apparently compromising the delicacy of Corinna in nearly passing the evening solely in her society, before such a numerous assembly. “Be tranquil,” said she, “none of the company thinks of us; it is a practice here to select that society one prefers—such is not only an

established custom, but it is prescribed by the system of politeness which prevails.—No one calculates the scale and extent of his enjoyments by the sentiments and opinions of others. In this country, liberty, I must acknowledge, does not exist as you understand it in England; but we enjoy herein a perfect social independence.” “That is,” replied Oswald, “they pay no regard to morality or decorum,” “None, at least, to *hypocrisy*,” rejoined Corinna: M. de la Rochefoucault says ‘of the faults of a woman of gallantry, the least is that of *appearing* to be one.’ In fact, whatever may be the defects of Italian wives, they do not conceal them, and if the marriage contract be not adequately respected, it is with the positive concurrence of the parties.”

To these remarks Oswald answered, “It is by no means to a sincere and ingenuous mind that such frankness is to

be attributed, but to a total disregard of public opinion. On my arrival here I had a letter of recommendation to a lady of the highest rank, a princess. I gave it to my Italian servant, in order to deliver it to her highness's domestic porter: on which he said, 'at present, sir, this letter will be of no service—the princess sees no one—she is *in love*,—and this predicament of being enamoured, is mentioned with as little hesitation as that of any other circumstance in life. Nay, this publicity is not extenuated by the effects of an extraordinarily ardent passion: several attachments succeed each other, and are all equally known. In those respects the Italian wives use so little reserve, that they avow their own connexions with less embarrassment than our English ladies would have in speaking of such things to their husbands. No genuine feelings, nor delicate sentiment blends with their passions, to which they easily bring themselves to

give free indulgence. Thus, in this country, where they think of nought but love, there is not a single romance produced, because the passion is so transient with respect to individual objects, in its duration, and so publicly gratified, as to afford no ground for plot, or materials for denouement : so that were the general character and scope of such things to be truly represented, a single page would be sufficient for the purpose. Pardon me, Corinna," said Lord Nelvil, on perceiving she seemed hurt by the remarks : " *You are an Italian, an idea which should have disarmed me—but one of the causes of your incomparable grace is that combination of all the various charms which characterise different countries. I know not in what country you have been educated, perhaps it may be in England itself—certainly you have passed your life in Italy. Ah! Corinna, if my conjecture be true, how, let me ask, could you have quitted that sanctuary*

of female delicacy and virtue for this nation, where not only virtue, but even love is so little appreciated? Here they manifest it externally, but the heart remains untouched. The poetry, too, of this country, in which love forms the greater part of the subject, are fraught with grace—with imagination: they contain affecting and voluptuous pictures, illumed with lively and brilliant colours; but you in vain seek for those tender and affecting sentiments which so highly adorn the English poetry. What have you here that can compare to the scenes between Belvidera and Jaffier, in Otway; to the character and sentiments of Romeo and those of the object of his love, in Shakspeare, or above all, to those admired lines in the “Spring,” of Thomson, in which he pourtrays, in colours so noble, so beautiful, and so affecting, the joys and happiness of wedded love? Are there such marriages in Italy?—And where there is no domestic happiness,

can love exist? The attainment of such happiness is the object of a passion really affecting the heart, as that of mere possession is the object of mere sensual passion. Are not all young and handsome women nearly equal with respect to person? What then but the qualities of the heart and mind can decide the preference? Marriage, therefore, should constitute an association of all the sentiments and all the thoughts of those whom it unites. Illicit unions, when, unhappily, they exist amongst us, are, if I dare so express myself, *reflections* of the married state. They endeavour to find that happiness therein which they cannot experience at home; so that even infidelity is more moral in England than marriage itself in Italy."

These remarks were rather severe——they sensibly affected Corinna---her eyes were suffused with tears: she immediately quitted the apartment, and returned

home. Oswald was greatly chagrined at the idea of his having offended Corinna, but what had escaped him was the effect of a degree of irritation he felt in consequence of the brilliant success of Corinna that evening at the ball. He followed to her house, but she declined an interview. On the next day he solicited an audience, but in vain; her door was closed against him. These repeated refusals to see Lord Nelvil were owing to no affectation on the part of Corinna: the real cause was that she was deeply chagrined at the sentiments he entertained with respect to the Italians, at the same time she wished to conceal, as far as possible, that she was so affected.

On the other hand, Oswald could not avoid perceiving that Corinna, on this occasion, did not manifest her usual unaffected simplicity; this consideration augmented his discontent at what passed

at the ball; and both excited in him the first idea of resisting a passion of which he began to fear the absolute controul. His principles were rigid, and the mystery which enveloped the past life of her whom he loved, was a cause of great solicitude to him. The manners of Corinna appeared fascinating in his eyes.. but were sometimes too lively and obtrusive, from her great desire of generally pleasing. He observed much dignity and reserve in her conversation and manners, but too great a latitude in her opinions. In fact, Oswald was captivated by this charming woman; he at the same time cherished a rigid monitor within his breast, which grappled strongly with his passion. This state of mind generally is one of much distress, as involving nearly alike internal and external unhappiness; the internal struggle, in such a case, is often the most heart-rending, when the self-scrutiny is so severe as that the one or the other of

the opposing sentiments gain a complete mastery.

It was in this state of mind that Lord Nelvil wrote to Corinna, as may easily be perceived by the style of the letter—the strength and agitation of his feelings are apparent, as is also his indecision, and it shews him, in fine, so distressed by the conflicting passions within his breast, as to be willing, at almost any price, to put an end to the struggle.

A report, which, however, he did not implicitly credit, that the Count d'Erfeuil had mentioned to him, contributed perhaps not a little to render his letter of the above description. It was reported in Rome that Corinna and the Prince d'Amalfi were to be married. Oswald was satisfied that she loved not this person, and was inclined to think that the affair of the ball gave rise to the report; but on the other hand he

had little doubt of her having received a visit from the prince the morning of one of those days when she declined seeing himself. Too proud to manifest the least symptom of jealousy, he in some degree vented his internal chagrin by aspersing that nation for which he beheld, with much dissatisfaction, the strong partiality of Corinna.

CHAP. III.

OSWALD TO CORINNA.

January 24, 1795.

“ YOU refuse to see me—you are offended at our late conversation—you have, doubtless, resolved to admit no one to your house, save those of your own country, and thus, seemingly at least, wish to avenge the injustice committed by one of another nation. Nevertheless I am far from regretting that which I said to you—one whom I fondly imagined to be English ; and I venture to repeat, with more decisive conviction, that you will never find either a dignified or felicitous companion, if you select a husband from amongst those by whom you are-surrounded. I know not the Italian

in existence who is worthy of you— Not one among them, whatever may be his rank, can honor you by his alliance. In Italy, the men are less estimable than the women, inasmuch as they possess their faults in common with those peculiar to their own sex. Can you convince me that the inhabitants of the south, who fly with so much solicitude from pain and distress, and are so devoted to pleasure, are capable of love? Have you not, I ask, seen at a public spectacle, within the last month, a husband who acknowledged he had but eight days before lost his wife, and a wife whom he said he loved? Here they abstract themselves, as far as possible, from every consideration of death. The funereal ceremonies are entirely performed by the priests, as the duties of love are performed by the *obsequious cavaliers*. Custom and ceremonial prescribe them.-- Affection and regret are set at nought.-- Finally, and it is this, above all other

considerations, which destroys the principle of real love, viz. the men, in the total want of firmness of character, and the absence of every serious occupation in life, are not respected by the other sex, nor can they experience any rational deference from them. It is essential, with respect to natural and social order, at least, when exhibited in their greatest beauty, that men should be the protectors of the female sex, but at the same time that the protector should respect that comparative weakness which he defends, and adore that powerless divinity, which, like the *Penates* of the ancient mythology, diffuses happiness and blessings throughout the house. Contrary to this, it appears, in this country, that the women are the active rulers, and the men the passive followers.

“ In this country, the men possess the softness and suavity of the female character. An Italian proverb lays down, that

“ he who cannot dissemble, knows not how to live !” Was not this suggested originally by a woman ? Indeed, in a country which presents no career of military promotion, nor any civil aggrandisement, how can a man assume a character of dignity or strength ? Should they endeavour to excel in those considerations where genuine ability are requested, they may be compared to a party at chess, where success is every thing. They retain certainly some traits of the antique character, somewhat of the sublime in their language, and in exterior magnificence ; but, accompanying this baseless grandeur, you often see a vulgar taste, and a miserably neglected domestic system. Is this, Corinna, the nation you prefer above all others ? Is this the country whose loud applauses are so necessary to you that all other destinies appear silent by the side of these brave vociferators ? Who can flatter himself in being so happy as to detach you

from such tumultuous scenes? you possess great incongruity of character---you are profound in your sentiments, but superficial in your tastes; independant by the dictates of a lofty spirit, but at the same time, enslaved by your eccentricity of object, competent to love but one, yet standing in need of the admiration, the love of many. You are a magician, who alternately sooth, and perturb, the object of your exorcism. You ascend to sublimity, from those regions where you are incomparable to the empyrean, where you are blended with a crowd. Corinna, O, Corinna, no one can hesitate at once to love and fear you.

“NELVIL.”

Corinna, on perusing this letter, was offended at the inveterate prejudices which Oswald still manifestly retained against her country. At the same time, she had the perspicuity to perceive that he was chagrined at what passed at the feté, and

chagrined at what passed at the fête, and still more at her refusing to see him since the subsequent conversation : this reflection not a little alleviated the painful sensations which many points in this letter had created. She hesitated some time, or, at least, appeared to hesitate, with respect to the line of conduct she should observe on the occasion. She certainly wished to see him, as before ; but, at the same time, felt much distressed that he should imagine she wished to marry him. Not only from the consideration that her fortune was, at least, equal to his, but that she had it in her power, by revealing her name, to shew it was nought inferior to that of Lord Nelvil. Nevertheless, the remarkable and independent system of life she had adopted, should have removed her from all matrimonial connections ; and certainly she would have repelled the idea, if her predilection had not rendered her blind to all the un-

favourable circumstances she would have encountered, by marrying an Englishman, and forsaking Italy.

We easily sacrifice pride, where the feelings of the heart are at issue; but worldly appearances or interests are to be attended to: they therefore present an obstacle, as they presume that no body whom we love makes a sacrifice by uniting himself to us; it is, of course, impossible to shew, in that respect, any dereliction of sentiment. Corinna could not resolve to break with Oswald, fondly persuading herself that she could see him in future, and conceal those impressions he had made upon her heart. In this view she had determined, in answering his letter, strictly to confine herself to a vindication of the Italian nation from the unjust aspersions he had cast upon it, and to discuss that topic as if it were the sole one that interested her. Perhaps this is the most effectual mode in

which a woman of elevated mind and spirit can endeavour to retain her dignity and self-possession.

CORINNA TO LORD NELVIL.

Jan. 25, 1795.

“ MY LORD,

“ IF your letter had concerned nought but myself, I should not have attempted a justification. My character is known to the world, though perhaps I may not entirely comprehend it myself: nor could it be adequately known from any description I should undertake to give of it. That reserve, so apparently fraught with virtue, which distinguishes the English ladies, and that art, so full of grace, which the French ladies possess, believe me, often serves to conceal the half of what passes in the souls of either: and that which you are pleased to call *magic* in me, is nothing but an artless freedom, which sometimes exposes a variety of sentiments and thoughts, partly opposing each

other, and for which no pains are taken to make appear uniform and consistent. When such uniformity exists, it is always fictitious—the far greater part of real characters are devious and irregular. But, my Lord, it is not, I assure you, respecting myself I mean to write, but of that injured nation you have so cruelly aspersed. Can it be my affection for my friends that has inspired you with such violent animosity? You know me too well to be jealous of any one; indeed I am not so proud to imagine, for a moment, that such a feeling tends to render you so manifestly unjust. You express yourself of the Italians just as all foreigners are spoken of, namely, from impressions received at first sight! But you must consider the character of a nation more deeply, which has experienced such a diversity of grand and interesting epochs. Whence comes it, I would ask, that this nation has been, under the Romans, the most military of all others—

the most jealous of her liberties among the republics of the middle ages—and, in the sixteenth century, the most illustrious in the annals of science, literature, and art? Has she not, therefore, courted glory under all its forms? And if now she boasts not its possession, why not impute the change to political circumstances? since you must be aware, that, in other circumstances, Italy was far different from what she is at present.

“ I know not whether I be wrong, but I must say that the injustice suffered by the Italians induces me almost to pity their fate. The inhabitants of other countries, from time immemorial, have conquered, have lacerated the bosom of Italy:—that fine country, unceasingly, the object of their ambition: and foreigners, most illiberally, have uniformly ascribed to this country, as inherent, those faults which are solely attributable to its unfortunate circum-

stances. Europe has received from Italy the arts and sciences, and although she is no longer blessed with her preference, Italy still occasionally contests that last species of glory permitted to nations destitute of military prowess, and bereft of political liberty,—viz. that of excelling in science and in art.

“ It is so true that political government forms the character of a nation, that in Italy a remarkable difference in manners and character may be perceived between those of the various states of which it consists. The Piedmontese, who form a nation within themselves, possess a more military spirit than any other part of Italy. The Florentines, who have enjoyed liberty, or sovereigns of a liberal character, are mild and intelligent. The Venetians and Genoese have evinced themselves capable of political discrimination, because the genius of their government is republican,

though aristocratic. The Milanese are more sincere, inasmuch as great influx from Northern climes to that quarter has left therein much of their character. Neapolitans may easily be rendered warlike, because they have long been united, under a regular, though imperfect, government. The Roman nobility, destitute of either political or military occupation, would naturally become ignorant or idle. But the ecclesiastical spirit, possessing both a character and occupation, has greatly the advantage over that of nobility. The Papal government respects not distinction of birth, such being contrary to the elective spirit of its constitution : this produces a sort of practical liberality, not in idea only, but in manners which renders Rome the most agreeable residence for those who are not inspired by ambition, and who have no prospect of advancing their fortunes in the world.

“ The inhabitants of the south are more easily modified by institution than those of the north. The indolence of the former verges into resignation, and nature presents them with enjoyments which readily consoles them for the absence of political advantages. Notwithstanding society is less refined than in many other countries, there is certainly no small degree of corruption in Italy. You may perceive somewhat of an almost savage impetuosity in her people—notwithstanding the great apparent subtlety of their minds: this subtlety, however, resembles that which a hunter displays in the surprise of his prey. Indolent people are capable of great deception: they possess a suavity of manner, which aids them to dissemble, if necessary, even their anger; and by their ordinary manners can well disguise fortuitous circumstances.

“ The Italians are sincere and faithful

in their private relations. Interest and ambition possess great sway, but pride and vanity comparatively little. The distinctions of rank are of trifling avail at the same time, there is little of that variation in society or fashion, which affords grounds for journalists to describe in detail. These sources of habitual dissimulation exist not among them:—when they deceive their enemies and their rivals, it is because they consider them as in a state of war ; but in peace and conciliation they are open and ingenuous. It is this very ingenuousness that gives rise to those failings of which you complain. The women unceasingly hear the passion of love : living in the midst of seduction, and of examples of illicit intercourse, they dissemble not their feelings in that respect ; and thus, blending with gallantry a portion of innocence, they pay no regard to ridicule, especially to that which general society may throw upon them. Some are so ig-

norant, that they cannot write, and they freely acknowledge it. They answer a morning billet, by means of their amanuenses in great form, and in an appropriate style. But, on the other hand, among those who are educated, you will find professors in the academies, that give lessons publicly, decorated with black scarves: should you laugh at such an exhibition, their answers would be—"Is it injurious to understand Greek? Is it disgraceful to obtain a livelihood by one's exertions? Why do you laugh at a thing so natural?"

"Shall we now, my lord, proceed to the consideration of a still more delicate subject? Shall I attempt to develop the causes of the modern Italians evincing so little military spirit? They certainly risque their lives from impulses of either love or hatred, with very little hesitation; the wounds inflicted by the

poniard in either case, astonish or alarm no one. They fear not death, when the impulse of natural passion causes them to brave it; but they often, it must be acknowledged, prefer life to considerations of political interest, which affect them but little, as politically speaking, they have no country. Even the honourable spirit of chivalry, has little influence in a nation, where the sentiment, or state of society which formed it, exists no longer. And it is as little to be wondered at, that in such a disorganization of all the public powers, that the women should assume the ascendant over the other sex; and, perhaps, they possess more of those qualities which create admiration and respect. At the same time, their conduct towards them is fraught with delicacy and devotion. In England, the domestic virtues constitute the glory and happiness of the wives: but, if there are countries, where love more frequently subsists in other than in ma-

trimonial connections, Italy is that of all others, where the happiness of the women is the most attended to. Though the men very often transgress the dictates of morality, they are just, nay, generous in portioning their attentions: they consider themselves as more culpable than the women, when they break their vows of love; because the latter make greater sacrifices, and lose more. They think that in the code of the affections, the most criminal are those who cause the greatest evil; when the men act wrongfully, it is through vicious inclination; when the women, it is through weakness: so they seem to regard it. In societies, at once rigorous and debauched, where faults, followed by misfortunes, are deemed unpardonable, women are the more severely treated; but in countries, where public opinion has no influence, a more indulgent system naturally prevails.

“ The ideas of consideration and dignity, are much less powerful, and even much less known, I grant you, in Italy, than any where else. The absence of political society, and of public opinion, are the causes: but, notwithstanding all that has been said of the perfidy of the Italians, I maintain there is no country in the world, wherein there exists more unaffected good nature. In all that regards vanity, this good nature is such, that although the country of which foreigners speak the most unfavourably, there is none where they meet so favourable a reception. The Italians have been reproached with too great a proneness to flattery; in this view it must be said, that in most instances that which may appear as flattery, proceeds not from interested consideration, but from an ardent desire to please, which renders them prodigal of their praises; they are inspired by a real de-

sire of obliging; and their language in that respect is not belied by their habitual conduct. They are sometimes faithful to their friendships, in the most extraordinary circumstances, even where it is necessary to encounter peril, or meet adversity. Of this, however, I admit comparatively, a small number are capable; but many other countries, as well as Italy, are liable to a similar remark.

“ The Italians partake even of an oriental lassitude, but there are no men in existence, more active or persevering, when their passions are once excited. The very women, indolent as you have perceived, as the Sultanas of the Seraglio, are capable, on the spur of occasion, of the most astonishing action. There is somewhat mysterious in the Italian character and imagination. You may perceive in it alternately, the most unexpected traits of generosity and friend-

ship, and the most gloomy and fearful proofs of hatred and vengeance. In Italy there is no object for emulation. Life is there little more than a crowded dream, under a celestial sky: but, give these people a substantial object, and you would see in six months, that all would learn, and all understand; this remark certainly includes the women: but why instruct these, since the greater part of the men know nothing? They may perhaps, isolate their hearts, while cultivating their understandings; but these women would speedily become worthy of superior men, did such become the object of their tenderness. Here all sleep; but in a region, where every important interest slumbers, repose and unconsciousness are more respectable than a little vain agitation, for paltry or insignificant objects.

“ Literature itself languishes here, for those sources whence it should spring,

are not supplied by a variety of important circumstances. But, let me ask, under all these disadvantages, has not Italy testified as great, if not a greater admiration, than any other country for letters, and the fine arts? We know from historical records, that the Popes, the Roman princes, and the people, have uniformly rendered to eminent painters, to poets, and to writers of merit, the most distinguished homage. This enthusiasm for genuine talent, my lord, I avow to be one of the principal considerations which attaches me to this country. (16.) Here are found no attempts to check the imagination, to discourage wit, or powers vested in a general mediocrity, to thwart or frustrate the productions of natural genius. Here, an idea, a sentiment, a felicitous expression, in a manner electrifies a crowd of auditors. Talent, which here holds the first rank, excites at the same time, no small portion of envy. Pergolese was

assassinated, on account of that exquisite composition of his *Stabat*. Giorgione armed himself with a cuirass, when he was obliged to paint in public: this violent jealousy which talent creates amongst us, renders it powerful in other countries, at the same time this jealousy here, degrades not its object; this jealousy can hate, proscribe, annihilate, and nevertheless, blending fanaticism with admiration, it still excites that genius which it persecutes. In short, when we behold such a portion of life enclosed in so limited a circle, in the midst of so many obstacles and discouragements of all kinds, we cannot avoid, at least I feel so, taking a lively interest in the fate of a people, who inhale with avidity, the small portion of ether, which imagination causes to penetrate those inclosures which confine them.

“ These obstacles are such, I deny it not, that men in Italy can now rarely,

if at all, acquire that degree of self-importance, and of dignity, which distinguishes men of free and military nations. I shall acknowledge, if you insist on it, my lord, that the character of those nations, is more capable of inspiring their women with sentiments of enthusiasm, and of love. But, at the same time, it is impossible, that a really brave man, austere, and dignified, can unite in his person all those qualities which create love, without also possessing those which promise to ensure happiness.

“CORINNA.”

CHAPTER IV.

THIS letter of Corinna induced Oswald a second time to repent his determination to endeavour to forget her. The amiable softness and sublime dignity with which she obviated the severe language which had escaped from him, excited his fondest admiration. A superiority so great, so simple, so well founded, appeared to him to transcend all ordinary considerations. He had previously felt that Corinna was by no means a feeble, timid, irresolute woman, nor destitute of those qualities or sentiments with which he wished her gifted, whom he should desire as his companion for life; the recollection of Lucilia, such as he had seen her at the age of twelve, accorded more

with this idea ; but in what could she compare with Corinna ? Could the ordinary rules and considerations be applied to one who united in her person so many various qualifications of sensibility and genius. Corinna was a very miracle in nature ; but this miracle must have been produced in favour of Oswald alone ; for so he flattered himself. But what was her real name, and what was her condition in life ? What would her future line of conduct be if he declared his intention of marrying her ? All was yet in obscurity ; and although the enthusiasm which Oswald felt for Corinna persuaded her that he was determined to marry her, yet the idea that the life of Corrinna had not been altogether irreproachable, and that such a marriage would have been condemned by his father, frequently harrowed up his soul, and threw him into the most painful anxiety.

He was not so downcast with sorrow as at the time when he was not acquainted with Corinna ; but he no longer felt that sort of composure which exists even in the midst of repentance, when our whole life is consecrated to the expiation of a great crime. Formerly he was not afraid to abandon himself to his recollections, however bitter they were ; but now he shunned those long and profound reveries which might awaken him to what was passing at the bottom of his heart. He prepared, however, for visiting Corinna, in order to thank her for her letter, and obtain forgiveness for that which he had written, when he saw Mr. Edgermond, a relation of the young Lucilia, enter his apartment.

He was a worthy English gentleman, who had lived almost all his life in the principality of Wales, where he had an estate ; he had those principles and prejudices which make a man appear what is

called old fashioned in every country ; and those prejudices are beneficial, when things are as they should be ; such men as Mr. Edgermond, therefore, that is to say, the partisans of the established order of things, although strongly and even obstinately attached to their habits, ought nevertheless to be considered as enlightened and rational beings.

Lord Nelvil started upon hearing Mr. Edgermond's name announced : all his recollections as it were, crowded upon him at once ; but it immediately came into his head, that Lady Edgermond, Lucilia's mother, had sent her relation to reproach him, and that she was therefore anxious to controul his independence. This idea restored all his firmness, and he received Mr. Edgermond with extreme coolness. He was wrong in giving him this reception, however, for Mr. Edgermond had not the smallest object to serve by visiting him. He was travel-

ling through Italy on account of his health, taking a great deal of exercise, hunting, and drinking to King George and old England; he was a very honest man, and he also possessed much more genius and talent than his appearance denoted. He was English in every thing; not only as much an Englishman as he should be, but also more so than one could have wished him to have been;—following in all countries the customs peculiar to his own—living with Englishmen only—never conversing with foreigners, not from disdain, but from a kind of repugnance against foreign languages, and from a timidity, even at the age of fifty, which rendered him shy of forming new acquaintances.

“ I am delighted at seeing you,” said he to Lord Nelvil; “ I am going to Naples in fifteen days—shall I meet with you there? I should like it much, as I have but a short time to remain in

Italy, my regiment being about to embark immediately.”—“Your regiment!” repeated Lord Nelvil, and he blushed, as if he had forgotten that he had leave of absence himself for a year, his own regiment not being to be employed before that time; but he blushed to think that Corinna had made him forgetful even of his duty. “Your regiment,” continued Mr. Edgermond, “will not be sent upon service so soon; you may, therefore, re-establish your health here without inquietude; I saw my young cousin before I left England, who, I believe, interests you much; she is more charming than ever; and in a year hence, when you return, I have no doubt she will be the finest woman in England.” Lord Nelvil was silent, and Mr. Edgermond held his tongue also. They then made use of some laconic expressions of good will, and Mr. Edgermond departed; on his way out, he turned back, and said, “Apropos, my lord, it is in your power to do me a fa-

vour ; I am told you are acquainted with the celebrated Corinna, and although I am not fond of forming new acquaintances, yet I am very curious to see her."

" I shall ask Corinna's permission to introduce you to her, since you desire it,"

said Oswald. " Let me hear her sing, or see her dance, some day or other, before us," replied Mr. Edgermond.

" Corinna," said Lord Nelvil, " does not exhibit her talents in this manner to strangers ; she is our equal in every respect."

" Pardon my mistake," returned Mr. Edgermond ; " as she has never been known by any other name than that of Corinna, and as she has lived six-and-twenty years alone, without any one of her family attending her, I thought she lived by her talents, and cheerfully took every opportunity of making them known."

" Her fortune," answered Lord Nelvil sharply, " is completely independent, and her mind is still more so." Mr. Edgermond was sorry that he had mentioned

her name, when he saw that the subject interested Oswald. The English, of all men in the world, have the most discretion and prudence in every thing that concerns the true affections.

Mr. Edgermond went away. Lord Nelvil, when left alone, could not help exclaiming to himself, "I must marry Corinna—I must be her protector, in order that no person in future may despise her. I shall give her what little I have to bestow—a rank, a name; while she, in return, will overwhelm me, in her own person, with all the happiness the world can bestow." In this disposition he hastened to Corinna, and he never visited her with a milder sentiment of hope and love; but by a natural impulse of timidity, he began the conversation, in order to gain courage, by some insignificant question, and among the rest he asked permission to introduce Mr. Edgermond: at the mention of this name,

Corinna was visibly agitated, and refused his request with a faltering accent. Oswald was confounded, and said to her, "I once thought that in a house where you receive so much company, the title of being my friend would be no cause of exclusion."—"Be not offended, my lord," replied Corinna, "believe me, I have very powerful reasons for not consenting to your request." "And will you tell me your reasons?" said Oswald. "Impossible!" cried Corinna, "Impossible!"—"Be it so!" said Oswald, and the violence of his emotion choking his utterance, he would have gone away. Corinna then burst into tears, and addressed him in English: "In the name of God, if you do not wish to break my heart, do not leave me!"

These words, and that accent, harrowed up Oswald's soul, and he sat down again, at some distance from Corinna, his head resting against an alabaster vase

which adorned her apartment: he then said to her hastily, "Cruel woman, you see that I love you—you see that twenty times a day I am ready to offer you my hand and my life, and yet you will not tell me who you are! Tell me, Corinna, tell me," he repeated, stretching out his hand to her with an expression of the most melting sensibility—"Oswald," cried Corinna, "Oswald, you do not know what harm you are doing me. If I were foolish enough to tell you all, you would no longer love me."—"Great God!" he replied, "What have you to reveal?" "Nothing which renders me unworthy of you; but some accidents and differences between our tastes, our opinions, which have hitherto existed, would exist no longer. Do not require me to make you acquainted—some day, perhaps, if you love me sufficiently—if—ah! I do not know what I say," continued Corinna—"you shall know all; but do not abandon me before hearing

me. Promise in the name of your father, who is now in heaven"—Do not mention that name," cried Lord Nelvil. "Do you know if he will unite or separate us? Do you think he consents to our union? If you think so, tell me, and I shall no longer be distracted. One day I shall tell you what my miserable life has been, but at present witness in what state you put me!" In fact his forehead was covered with a cold sweat, his visage was pale, and his lips faltered in articulating these last words. Corinna sat down beside him, and holding his hands in hers, gently recalled him to his senses. "My dear Oswald," she said to him, "ask Mr. Edgermond if he was ever in Northumberland, or at least, if he was there five years ago; if he answers in the negative, you may bring him here."—Oswald looked stedfastly at Corinna; she held down her head, and was silent. Lord Nelvil answered, "I shall do what you desire me," and he went away.

When he got home he was distracted with conjectures as to Corinna's secret; it appeared evident to him, that she had spent a great deal of her time in England, and that her name and family must be known there. But what motive induced her to conceal them, and why had she quitted England, if she had once been settled there? These various questions agitated Oswald considerably; he was convinced that nothing wrong could be discovered in the life of Corinna; but he dreaded lest there might be a combination of circumstances, which might render her culpable in the eyes of others, and what he suspected most was that she had been traduced in England. He was proof against the disapprobation of every other country; but the memory of his father was so deeply interwoven with his ideas of his own, that these two sentiments mutually increased with each other. Oswald learnt from Mr. Edgermond that he had been in Northumber-

land, for the first time in his life, the year preceding, and he therefore promised to conduct him that evening to Corinna. He went first himself, in order to acquaint her with the notions Mr. Edgermond entertained respecting her, and begged her to make him feel, by her cool and reserved deportment, how much he was deceived.

“ If I have your permission,” replied Corinna, “ I shall behave towards him as I do to all the world ; if he desires to hear me, I shall deliver an extempore effusion before him. In short, I shall display myself such as I am, and I think that he will perceive the dignity of my mind equally well through a simplicity of conduct, as if I assumed a constrained and affected appearance.”—“ Yes, Corinna,” answered Oswald, “ you are right. Ah ! how improper it would be to disguise your own natural genius !”—Mr. Edgermond arrived at this moment,

with the rest of the company. At the beginning of the evening, Lord Nelvil placed himself beside Corinna ; and, with an interest which resembled, at one and the same time, the lover and the friend, he said every thing that could inspire her with self-esteem. He soon saw, with great joy, an end to all his inquietudes ; Corinna captivated Mr. Edgermond all at once, not only by her wit and her beauty, but by inspiring him with that sentiment of esteem which sincere characters always obtain from honest ones ; and when he ventured to ask her to speak on a subject of her choice, he did so with as much respect as earnestness. She consented in an instant, and thus taught him that this favour had its price, independent of the difficulty of obtaining it.

She had so keen a desire to please a countryman of Oswald's, and a man, too, who, from the respect he commanded,

must have influenced Oswald's opinion when her name was mentioned between them, that this sentiment inspired her with a timidity which was new to her; she would have begun, but her emotion prevented her. Oswald was chagrined because she did not display herself in all her superiority to an Englishman. He held down his head, and his confusion was so evident, that Corinna, solely occupied by the effect she produced upon him, lost more and more that presence of mind necessary for an extempore effusion. At last, finding that she hesitated, that her words came from her memory, and not from her sentiment, and that she neither described what she thought, she stopped abruptly, and said to Mr. Edgermond:—"Pardon me, if timidity has for once deprived me of my talents, my friends know that this is the first time I ever felt beneath myself, but it will not be the last, perhaps," she added, with a sigh.

Oswald was deeply impressed with Corinna's weakness. Hitherto he had always seen her imagination and her genius triumph over her affections, and raise up her soul at the time it was most cast down. Upon this occasion, the sentiment she felt had completely subjugated her mind ; and Oswald was so closely interested in Corinna's glory, that he felt as much as she herself did on the occasion. As he was certain, however, that on another day she would shine with that lustre which was natural to her, he consoled himself with that reflection, and her fair image reigned more strongly than ever in his heart.

BOOK VII.

ITALIAN LITERATURE.

CHAPTER I.

LORD NELVIL was extremely anxious that Mr. Edgermond should enjoy the conversation of Corinna. The following day the same society assembled at her house; and, in order to induce her to speak, he turned the conversation upon the subject of Italian literature, and roused her natural vivacity, by affirming that England possessed a greater number of true poets, and superior in point of energy and sensibility, to all those which Italy could boast.

“ At first,” answered Corinna, “ foreigners were only acquainted, for the most part, with our poets of the first order ; such as Dante, Petrarch, Ariosto, Guarini, Tasso, and Metastasio ; while we have several others : Chiabrera, Guidi, Felicaja, Paridi, &c. ; without reckoning Sannazarius, Politian, &c. who have written in Latin with much genius ; and all unite the charms of harmony in their verses, all of them know how to introduce the wonders of the fine arts, and of nature, into the pictures represented by words. Without doubt, there is not in our poets that profound melancholy, that knowledge of the human heart, which characterizes your’s ; but does not this kind of superiority belong to philosophical writers rather than to poets ? The brilliant melody of the Italian agrees better with the lustre of external objects than with meditation. Our language would be more proper for painting fury than sadness, because mournful sentiments

require expressions more metaphysical, while the desire of vengeance animates the imagination, and banishes grief. Cesarotti has made the best and the most elegant translation of Ossian that we know ; but it seems, on reading it, that the words themselves have an air of festivity which contrasts with the dismal ideas they are intended to convey. We allow ourselves to be charmed by our soft language, as we are by the murmuring of waters, and the variety of colours. What more do you require of poetry ? Why would you ask the nightingale, what is the meaning of its song ? It can only explain it by beginning to sing again : we cannot understand it, and we must give ourselves up to the impression it produces. The measure of the verses, the harmonious rhymes, these rapid terminations, composed of two short syllables, the sounds of which slide, as it were, along, as their name implies, (*Sdrucchioli*) sometimes imitate the light

steps of a dance ; sometimes graver tones imitate the noise of stones, or the rattling of warlike instruments : in short, our poetry is a miracle of the imagination ; its beauties are to be discovered in every line."

" Without doubt," said Lord Nelvil, " you explain, as far as it is possible, both the beauties and the defects of your poetry ; but when these faults, without the beauties, are to be found in your prose, how will you defend it ? What is merely vague or indefinite in poetry, becomes an absolute vacuity in prose ; and that crowd of common ideas, which your poets know how to embellish by their melody and their imagery, appears to be extremely frigid in prose. The most of your prose-writers, of the present day, use a language so declamatory, so diffuse, and so abundant in superfluous expressions, that we may say they write, as it were, in a studied and received

phraseology, and as if it had been generally agreed upon. The literary style is to them an artificial texture, a close mosaic work, with something foreign to their minds in it, which falls, as it were, from the pen, like a mechanical work from the fingers; they possess, at the most, the secret of developing, of commenting, and of swelling an idea, of making a sentiment frothy, if we may be allowed the expression; so that we might almost venture to say to these writers, what was said by an African woman to a French lady, who wore a very large hoop, *Madam, does all this belong to your own body?*"

"You forget," said Corinna, hastily interrupting him, "Machiavel and Boccacio, Gravina, Filangieri, and also Cesarotti, Verri, and Bettinelli of our present day, and many others, who know so well how to write and think. (17) But I agree with you, that within these

last centuries some unfortunate circumstances having deprived Italy of her independence, the Italians have lost all interest for truth, and even the possibility of speaking it: From this has resulted the habit of giving pleasure in their language, without caring for their ideas. As they are certain that they are not able by their writings to obtain influence in society, they write merely for the purpose of displaying their genius, which is the surest method of soon coming to have no genius at all; because it is only by directing its efforts towards an useful and noble object, that we meet with the greatest abundance of ideas. When its prose writers cannot influence, in any way, the happiness of a nation, when they write only in order to dazzle, in short, when their only object is to rove freely, without a studied goal in view, they wander into a thousand turnings and windings, but they never advance a single step. The Italians, it is true, are afraid

of new thoughts, but they shun them from idleness, and not from literary servility. Their character, their gaiety, and their imagination, have much originality, and nevertheless, as if they gave themselves no longer the trouble of reflecting, their general ideas are common; their eloquence even, which is so lively when they talk, has nothing natural in it when they write: we might almost say, that they grew colder in proportion as they laboured; besides the people of the south find themselves under constraint in prose compositions, and they paint their real sentiments in verse only.—It is not so with respect to French literature,” observed Corinna, addressing herself to the Count D’Erfeuil; “your prose writers are often more eloquent, and even more poetical, than your poets.”—“It is true,” answered the Count, “that we have in that line authors of genuine classic merit: Bossuet, La Bruyère, Montesquieu, Buffon, especially, are in-

comparable ; — particularly the two first, who flourished in the time of Louis XIV. These cannot be too highly praised, and should be imitated as closely as possible, as perfect models." "I can scarcely believe," answered Corinna, "it would be desirable that the various countries of the world should lose the distinctive colouring, originality of thought, and turn of sentiment, of their different nations: and I venture to say that even in your country, M. le Comte, this literary orthodoxy, if such it may be called, which opposes itself to all felicitous innovation, would at length cramp and paralyze the sources of French literature. Genius is of an essential nature, and leaves the stamp and character of its possessor, Nature, who seems unwilling that even two leaves should exactly resemble each other, has placed a far greater diversity between the minds of men.—Imitation operates, therefore, as a species of mental death, as it so far deprives the imitator of the use, or the

existence, of that peculiar genius imparted to him by nature."

"You cannot mean," fair stranger," observed the Count, "that we should admit amongst us Teutonic barbarism — the Night Thoughts of the English Young — the *Concetti* of the Italian and the Spaniards. What would become of the taste, and elegance of the French style after such a mixture." The Prince Castel-Forte, who had not yet spoken, thus addressed the company: "It appears to me that we have all need of one another: the literature of every country discovers to the man who can understand it a new train of ideas. Charles V. himself observed, 'that the man who understood four languages was four times a man'. If that great political genius judged so of common affairs, how much more true ought it to be of letters? All foreigners know the French language, therefore their view of things must be more extensive than

that of the French, who are unacquainted with foreign languages. Why, then, do they not give themselves the trouble of more generally learning them? they would preserve that which distinguishes them, and, by the same means, sometimes discover what they may be deficient in."

CHAPTER II.

“ YOU must own, however,” replies the Count, “ that, in this respect, we have nothing to apprehend from any one. Our theatre is decidedly the first in Europe, for I do not think the English themselves would venture to oppose Shakespear to us.”—“ I ask your pardon,” interrupted Mr. Edgermond, “ they do venture to oppose Shakespear to you.”—“ Then I have nothing to say,” continued Count d’Erfeuil, with a smile expressive of his gracious disdain; “ every one can think as he pleases ; but, after all, I persist in believing that I may affirm, without presumption, we are the first in the dramatic art. And as to the Italians, if I may be permitted to speak freely, they only doubt whether there be

such a thing as dramatic art in the world ; music is every thing with them, and the piece nothing. If the second act of a piece has better music than the first, they begin with the second act ; if there are two acts of different pieces, they play the two acts the same day, and introduce between them an act of a comedy in prose, which commonly contains the best moral in the world, but a moral wholly composed of sentences, which our ancestors have already rejected as too antiquated even for them. Your famous musicians set the poets entirely aside ; one declares that he cannot sing if there is not in his song the word *felicità* ; the tenor demands *la tomba* ; and the third cannot warble but on the word *catene*. Thus the poor poet must adapt, as well as he can, their different tastes to the stage representation. This is not all yet : there are some of those virtuosi who will not come before the audience on the bare stage ; they must shew themselves first

in a cloud, or they must descend from on high, down the staircase of a palace, to produce more effect at their entrance. When the song is finished, the actor, in however moving or violent a situation he may be, ought to salute the spectators, to thank them for the applauses he obtains. The other day, in *Semiramis*, after the ghost of Ninus had sung his song, the actor who represented it made, in his dress of the ghost, a very profound reverence to the pit, which greatly diminished the terror of the apparition. We are accustomed in Italy, to look upon the theatre as the grand rallying point, where we hear nothing but airs and the *ballet*. It is not without reason that I say we hear nothing but the ballet, for it is not till that begins that the pit can be silent ; and the ballet is, after all, a *chef-d'œuvre* of bad taste. Except the antics, which is the proper caricature of dancing, I know nothing to amuse in these ballets but their ridiculousness. I have seen

Gengis-kan introduced in a ballet, covered all over with ermine, abounding in fine sentiments, because he gave up his crown to the son of the king whom he had conquered, and lifted him up into the air on his foot—a new way of establishing a monarch on his throne. I have also seen the devotion of Curtius, a ballet, in three acts, with all the *divertissement*. Curtius, dressed like a shepherd of Arcadia, danced a long time with his mistress before he mounted his horse, in the middle of the theatre, and threw himself into a gulph of fire, made of yellow satin and gilt paper, which looked like a court dress in the reign of Charlemagne. In short, I have seen in a ballet a complete abridgment of the Roman history, from Romulus to Cæsar.”

“ All that you have said is, perhaps, true,” replied the Prince Castel-Forte, mildly; “ but you have only spoken of

music and dancing, and these are not considered in any country as constituting the *drama*." — "So much the worse," interrupted the Count d'Erfeuil; "when they represent tragedies or dramas, which are not called *dramas with a joyful conclusion*; they combine more horrors in fine arts than the imagination can figure to itself. In one of the pieces of this description, the lover kills the brother of his mistress in the second act; in the third, he burns the body of his mistress herself on the stage; the fourth is filled with the interment; in the interval of the fourth and fifth act, the actor who plays the lover comes forward to announce, in the calmest manner possible, to the audience, the pantomimes which are to be given on the following day, and turns to the stage, in the fifth act, to shoot himself with a pistol. The tragic actors are in perfect harmony with the coldness and bombast of their pieces: they com-

mit all these terrible actions with the greatest calmness. When an actor is greatly agitated, they say he demeans himself like a preacher; for, in fact, there is much more emotion in the pulpit than on the stage; and it is a very happy circumstance that the actors are so tranquil in the pathetic; for, as there is nothing interesting in the piece nor in the situation, the more noise they made, the more ridiculous they would be. There is not, in Italy, more of comedy than of tragedy; and in that way, also, it is that we are the first. The only kind which properly belongs to Italy is pantomime—a cheating valet, a glutton and coward, an old guardian duped, a miser or a lover—these are the whole subjects of their pieces. You will agree, that it does not require much effort for such inventions, and that the *Tartuffe* and the *Misanthrope* discover somewhat more genius.” This attack of the Count d’Erfeuil highly displeased the Italians.

who heard him, and yet they laughed ; for the Count d'Erfeuil, in conversation, liked much better to shew his sense than the goodness of his disposition. His natural benevolence influenced his actions, but self-love his words. The Prince Castel-Forte, and all the Italians who were present, were impatient to refute the Count d'Erfeuil ; but, as they believed their cause would be better defended by Corinna than by all the rest, and as the pleasure of shining in conversation occupied their minds but very little, they entreated Corinna to reply, and contented themselves only with citing the names of Maffei, Metastasio, Goldoni, Alfieri, and of Monti. Corinna agreed, in the first place, that the Italians had nothing like a theatre ; but she would prove that circumstances, not want of talent, was the cause. Comedy, which takes its observations from manners, cannot exist except in a country where men live constantly in the midst of a numerous

and brilliant society: there is nothing in Italy, but violent passions or idle pleasures, and violent passions produce crimes or vices of so strong a complexion, that they make all shades of character disappear. But as to ideal comedy, namely, that which belongs to imagination, and suits itself to all times, as well as to all places, in Italy only it was invented. The characters of harlequin, punch, and pantaloon, are found in all these pieces in the same character. They consist on all occasions of masks, not of faces, that is to say, their physiognomy is that of a certain description of characters, not that of any particular individual. Undoubtedly the modern authors of pantomimes, finding all these parts chalked out beforehand, like the men of a chessboard, have not the merit of having invented them; but the first invention is due to Italy; and these fantastic personages, who from one end of Europe to the other, amuse all the children, and the men whom ima-

gination rendered children, ought to be considered as a creation of the Italians, which gives them a title to the art of comedy. The observation of the human heart, is an inexhaustible source for literature ; but those nations which are more inclined to poetry than to reflection, give themselves up to the intoxication of joy, rather than philosophic irony. There is something gloomy at the bottom of the pleasure, founded in the knowledge of man ; the gaiety truly inoffensive, is that which belongs to the imagination only. It is not that the Italians do not study acutely those men with whom they have business, and discover with more penetration than others, the most secret thoughts ; but, it is in common affairs only, they display their talents, and have not the custom of making a literary use of it. Perhaps too, they are not willing to generalize their discoveries, or to publish their remarks to the world. They have in their character something

of the prudent and dissembling, which counsels them not to expose by their plays, that which may serve to guide their conduct in particular situations, and not to reveal by fictions of the mind, what may be useful in circumstances of real life. Machiavel, however, far from concealing any thing, has disclosed all the secrets of a criminal policy; and from him may be seen, of what a dreadful knowledge of the human heart, the Italians are capable! but such profoundness is not within the sphere of comedy, and the leisure of society, properly so called, can alone teach the art of delineating characters for the comic scene. Goldoni, who lived at Venice, a city of Italy, where there is much society, has introduced into his pieces much more delicacy of observation, than is generally found in other authors. Notwithstanding his comedies are monotonous, where one sees the same situations recur over and over again, because there

is little variety in his characters. His numerous productions seem made after the plan of plays in general, not from real life. The true character of Italian gaiety is not buffoonery, but imagination; it is not a description of manners, but poetic exaggeration. It is Ariosto, not Moliere, who can amuse Italy. Gozzi, the rival of Goldoni, has much more originality in his composition, and they resemble much less regular comedies. He adopted the plan of giving himself freely up to the Italian genius, to represent fairy tales, to intermix buffooneries, and pantomines, with the marvellous, in his poems; to imitate nothing of nature, but to surrender his genius to the whims of gaiety, as well as to the chimeras of fairy land, and to draw his stores from materials, beyond the boundaries of a narrow world. He had wonderful success in his day, and perhaps he is an author who suits better than any other the Italian imagination; but, in order to

know exactly what comedy and tragedy are in Italy, we must be better informed of the description of their theatres and actors. The multitude of small towns, which must all have a theatre, destroys those means, which, if combined, would establish a respectable one. The division of states, so favourable in general to liberty and happiness, is injurious to Italy. It requires a central point of knowledge, and of power, to resist the prejudices which devour it. The authority of governments often represses individual ambition. In Italy, that authority would be a blessing, if it contended against the ignorance of separate states, and of men of distinct interests, if by emulation, it combated the indolence natural to the climate; in short, if it gave life to a nation which contents itself with a dream. These different ideas, and many more besides, were ingeniously stated by Corinna. She understood perfectly well how to sketch rapidly over

those light subjects, which are generally introduced in mixed companies, and the manner of pleasing every one in his turn, though she frequently abandoned herself during conversation to that talent, which had procured her the fame of a celebrated *improvisitrice*. Often did she entreat the Prince Castel-Forte, to come to her assistance, by offering his own opinion on the same subject; but, she spoke so well that all her hearers were delighted, and could not bear the idea of her being interrupted. Mr. Edgermond above all, could not satisfy himself with seeing and hearing Corinna; he hardly durst express to her the sentiments of admiration with which she inspired him, and uttered in a low tone of voice, some words in her praise, hoping she would understand them without his being obliged to pronounce them more distinctly. He had, however, so strong a desire to know her sentiments upon tragedy, that he ventured in spite of his timidity, to

address a few words on that subject. "Madam," said he to her, "what appears to me particularly wanting to Italian literature, is tragedy: it appears to me, there is less difference between children and men, than between your tragedies and ours: for children, in their playfulness have lively sentiments, but they are true ones, while the most serious of your tragedies have so much of the affected and bombast, that they stifle all emotion in me. Is it not true, Lord Nelvil?" continued Mr. Edgermond, turning towards him, and inviting him by his looks to support him, astonished that he had dared to speak before so many. "I think entirely as you do," replied Oswald. Metastasio, whom they boast of as the poet of love, gives to that passion the same complexion in all places, and in all situations. His songs are truly admirable, sometimes for their sweetness and harmony, sometimes for their lyric beauties of the first order.

which they contain, especially when they are detached from the play in which they have been placed; but we who possess Shakespear cannot allow this; Shakespear, who has penetrated more deeply into history and the passions of man, than to support two couple of lovers, who are found in almost all the pieces of Metastasio, and who are called sometimes Achilles, Tircis, Brutus, or Corilas, and sing all in the very same manner the chagrins and martyrdoms of love, which with them is quite superficial, and paint like insipidity itself the most boisterous passion of the human heart. With the most profound respect for the character of Alfieri, I must be allowed to make some reflexions on his pieces. Their object is so noble, the sentiments expressed agree so well with his personal conduct, that his tragedies ought always to be praised like his actions, since even they are criticised in some respect as literary works. But it appears to me, every one

of his tragedies has as much monotony in strength, as Metastasio has in sweetness. There is in the production of Alfieri, such a profusion of energy, and of magnanimity, or rather such an exaggeration of violence and crime, that it is impossible to distinguish the real character of his heroes. They are never either so wicked, or so generous as he describes them. Most of the scenes are composed to bring vice and virtue into contact; but the comparison is not made with the gradations of truth. If tyrants in their life time suffered those they oppressed to address them, as is done in the tragedies of Alfieri, one might be tempted to pity them. The play of Octavius, is one of those in which the want of probability is the most striking. Seneca incessantly moralizes Nero, as if he were the most patient of men, and Seneca the more courageous of the two. The master of the world, in this tragedy, consents to be insulted, and to be angry

in every scene for the pleasure of the spectators, as if he could not put an end to it by a single word. Certainly these dialogues afford an opportunity of putting the most beautiful answers into the mouth of Seneca, and one would wish to find in any speech or work, the noble thoughts he expresses; but, is it in this way, that an idea of tyranny is to be given? It is not to paint it in its frightful colours, but merely to make it a subject for the play of words. But if Shakespear had represented Nero, surrounded with men, who trembled and scarcely durst answer the most indifferent question; himself concealing his trouble, forcing himself to appear calm, and Seneca near him labouring an apology for the murder of Agrippa, would not the impression have been a thousand times grander? And instead of one reflection made by the author, would not a thousand have sprung up in the minds of the spectators, as well from the silence of the

speakers, and the truth of the description? Oswald might have spoken a long time yet, before Corinna would have interrupted him: she was so much pleased, both with the sound of his voice, and the noble elegance of his expressions, that she could have prolonged the impression for whole hours. Her looks rivetted upon him, could hardly be removed, even after he had done speaking. She turned gently to the rest of the company, who impatiently asked her what she thought of Italian tragedy; and turning again to Lord Nelvil—"My lord," said she, "I am of your opinion in almost every thing, it is not then to combat you that I answer, but to offer some exceptions to your observations, perhaps a little too general. It is true, that Metastasio is rather a lyric, than a dramatic poet, and that he paints love as one of those fine arts which embellish life, and not as a secret passion, most intimately connected with our misery or our happi-

ness. In general, although our poetry has been devoted to the celebration of love, I will venture to say, that we display a keener sensibility in the portraiture of every other passion. In order to produce verses on the amorous passion, it is supposed by us, that a particular style and character of language is alone necessary; therefore, not what they feel, or what they have experienced, but what they have read constitutes the inspiration of the amorous poets. Love, as it exists in Italy, is very unlike that which our poets describe. I know but of one romance, the *Fiammetta* of Bocace, in which this passion appears depicted in truly natural colours. Our poets expand and sublimates its sentiment, although it is known, that the genuine Italian feeling is deep and instantaneous, displaying itself rather in silent and impassioned action, than by studied and ingenious language. For the most part our literature exhibits a faint idea of

our character and manners. We are in fact, a nation too unassuming—I had almost said too humble, to venture to compose tragedies from materials furnished by our history, or at least characteristic of our peculiar sentiments. (18)

Alfieri, by a singular combination, was, if I may use the language, transplanted from the ancient to modern epochs. He was destined for action, but his fate confined him to writing: his style and his tragedies bear evident marks of this characteristic incongruity. In all his literary productions he had a political object—an object of this kind is, doubtless, the most laudable, but this really enhances but little works purely of the imagination. Alfieri was indignant at living in the bosom of a nation which certainly possessed many profound scholars and intelligent men, but of which the literati in general took an interest in nothing serious, and were solely pleased

with romances, with novels, and even madrigals. Alfieri, therefore, gave his tragedies an austere complexion and character; but he has, at the same time, divested them of all peculiar appropriation, of stage effect, and of all colloquial interest. He appears to have wished to counteract the natural vivacity and fervid imagination of the Italians. He has, however, been much admired, because his peculiar character, as well as the independence of his mind, is truly great; and, because the inhabitants of modern Rome enthusiastically applaud every encomium on the ancient Romans, as if their characters were identified. They as sincerely admire the manifestations of energy and independence, as they do the fine pictures that adorn their galleries. At the same time, it is not less true, that the tragedies of Alfieri are not calculated for the meridian of the genuine Italian theatre. Nay, farther, he has not truly characterised the man-

ners of those countries and periods which he affects to describe. His *Conspiracy of the Pazzi*, *Virginia*, *Philip the Second*, are admirable essays by the elevation and force of the ideas, but we cannot avoid perceiving throughout the stamp and character of Alfieri, instead of those of the respective nations which he professes to exhibit. Although the French genius, with which Alfieri was inspired, bears no analogy to the Italian, yet they resemble each other in this particular, viz. that both impart their peculiar characters to the various subjects of which they treat."

The Count d'Erfeuil hearing this allusion to French genius, interposed;—"It would be impossible for us," said he, "to tolerate upon the stage the incongruities of the Grecian drama, or the monstrosities of Shakespear. The French are endowed with too pure a taste—our theatre is the mirror of refinement and

elegance : by those characteristics it is distinguished, and in order to avoid being infected with barbarism, we introduce no foreign description of drama amongst us." " In that view," said Corinna, smiling, " it would be expedient to environ yourselves with the great wall of China. There are certainly many great beauties in your tragic authors : it would, however, tend to elicit from them more interesting novelty, were other pieces than those of French production to be occasionally represented. The dramatic genius of the Italians would also suffer greatly, were it confined to the observance of such rules—rules which we should not have the honour of originating, but of which we should suffer all the disadvantages. The imagination, the character, the habitudes of a nation, should form its theatre. The Italians are passionately fond of the finer arts :—of music, painting, even of pantomime, in short, every thing which strikes the

senses. With such dispositions, how could an austere, though elegant dialogue possibly constitute their sole theatric pleasure? It was, therefore, vain for Alfieri, with all his genius, to think of rendering it so—he afterwards was himself convinced that his system was too rigorous. (19)

“ The Merope of Maffei, the Saul of Alfieri, the Aristodemus of Menti, and above all the poem of Dante, although this author never produced a tragedy, appear to me to shew to what a degree of excellence the Italian drama may be brought. In the Merope of Maffei, with much simplicity of action, there is brilliant poetic composition, replete with the happiest imagery; and why should such poetry be proscribed from dramatic writings. The harmony of the Italian versification possesses such strength and sweetness, that its disuse in such compositions is inconceivably injurious, Alfieri,

when he wished it, excelled in every description of this poetry: he has introduced the lyric with great advantage in his Saul; even music may be so introduced with the happiest effect—I mean, not by blending the singing with the words, but, as it were, to calm the furious transports of Saul with the harp of David. We possess a music so delicious, that its extasies can fascinate the spirit, and preclude the wish from any other enjoyment. Far, then, from wishing to separate music from dramatic exhibition, we should, on the contrary, endeavour to unite them, not by making *heroes sing*, which destroys all idea of dramatic dignity, but by the introduction of chorusses, on the principle of the ancient stage; or by the judicious and happy introduction of music in certain situations in the piece, so as by a natural combination to produce upon the whole the most charming effect. Far from endeavouring to diminish the pleasures of

the imagination on the Italian stage, we should, on the contrary, augment them, and in every possible mode. The lively taste of the Italians for music, and for grand and shewy ballets, indicates the powers of their imaginations, and the expediency of interesting those, even when serious subjects are in question, instead of rendering these still more gloomy and austere, as Alfieri has done.

The nation was, for a time, impressed with a belief, that, consistently, it should admire the grave and the austere, but it soon returned to its natural taste; and they became satisfied perfectly with tragedy, when embellished with the charm and variety of the different descriptions of poetry, and these theatrical diversities which are so grateful to a Spanish or an English audience.

The *Aristodemus* of Monti has somewhat of the terrible pathetic of Dante,

and certainly this tragedy has just claims to admiration. Dante, that great master of every kind of poetry, possessed a tragic genius, which would have produced a great effect in Italy, if, to a certain degree, it could be adapted to the stage; for this poet could forcibly paint the most secret passions of the heart, and particularly excelled in the display of grief. Had Dante written tragedies, they would have equally affected children and adults—the auditors in general, as well as individuals of the most cultivated minds. Dramatic literature should be popular: it is in some degree a national consideration, of which the public should judge.”

“When Dante flourished,” said Oswald, “the Italians were great political people among themselves, and on the great theatre of Europe. Perhaps it would now be impracticable to establish a national tragic theatre in Italy. In

order to constitute such a theatre, it would be necessary that those grand events should not unfrequently occur in life, which are exhibited on the stage. Of all the striking productions of literature, there is none in which the great body of the people are so immediately interested as in those of the theatre; to the effect of these, the spectators contribute near as much as the authors. In a dramatic composition, a great deal of public opinion should be infused, as well as considerations of history—of government—of manners—in short, of every thing that is daily the objects of our contemplation; with a view to constitute an air about us for our moral health, as the air which we respire contributes essentially to the support of our physical health. The Spaniards, to whom your climate and your religion renders you strongly similar, possess, notwithstanding, much more of the real dramatic genius than you do—their pieces are replete

with historical incident—with chivalrous matter—topics connected with their religious faith—and their pieces form a lively and original miscellany—but the period of their principal success in those respects is to be traced to the epochs of their historical glory. How then could it be expected to establish in Italy, at this day, that which has never existed, viz. a tragic theatre?”

“It is unfortunately possible, my lord, that you may be right,” observed Corinna; “nevertheless, I trust there will always exist in Italy an adequate natural elevation of spirit, an individual emulation, notwithstanding the depression of adverse circumstances; but what principally fails us with respect to tragedy is good performers. Affecting sentiments necessarily require an artificial declamation, or pitch of delivery: but in no language existing has a great actor the display of such various talent as in the

Italian ; for the melody of its sounds adds a new charm to correctness of accentuation ; it is a continued music which blends itself with the expression, and from which nothing can entirely take away the effect.”—“ If you are inclined to convince us of what you say,” interrupted the Prince of Castel-Forte, “ it will be necessary that you prove it. Yes, give us the inexpressible pleasure of seeing you perform in tragedy. It behoves you to let our foreign visitors see that you deem them worthy of the rare enjoyment of knowing the existence of a talent which you alone possess in Italy, or rather which you only possess among created beings.”

Corinna entertained a secret desire to exhibit in tragedy in the presence of Lord Nelvil, and to shew herself to advantage in that line of excellence also, but she would not venture to attempt it without his express desire, and this she

seemed to look for by the expression of her countenance. This he perfectly understood, and as he was affected by her timidity on the occasion, and wished the favourable opinion of Mr. Edgermond for her, he joined the solicitations of her friends. Corinna hesitated no longer:—“ Well, then,” said she, turning towards the Prince of Castel-Forte, “ we shall accomplish, if you please, the project I conceived some time since, of reciting parts of the translation I have made of *Romeo and Juliet*.”——“ The *Romeo and Juliet* of Shakspear!” exclaimed Mr. Edgermond——“ You understand English then ?”——“ Yes,” answered Corinna :... “ And you like Shakspeare ?” “ As a friend,” she replied, “ because he profoundly understands the passions--grief in particular.” “ And you will recite in Italian ? then I shall perfectly understand it, and you also, my dear Nelvil. Ah ! that you were blessed”——At the instant, he repented of having uttered this in-

discreet allusion, and coloured deeply : the blush inspired by a delicate compunction pleads for any age.—“ That we shall be blessed,” he added, evidently embarrassed, “ if you assist us at such an interesting spectacle.”

CHAP. III.

EVERY thing was arranged for the purpose in the course of a few days :— the parts were distributed, and the evening appointed for the representation, which was to take place in the palace of a relative of the prince of Castel-Forte's and a friend of Corinna. Oswald felt a mixture of anxiety and delight at this new approaching success. He enjoyed it by anticipation ; but at the same time, he felt jealousy by anticipation not of any particular individual, but of that part of the public, who should witness the transcendant talents of her whom he loved. He secretly wished, that no one but himself should be convinced that she possessed wit and charms : he wished Corinna timid and reserved as an English female, and

as possessing for him alone her genius and her eloquence. No man, however distinguished, perhaps, ever contemplated the superiority of a woman with unmixed pleasure: if he loved her, his heart by some means, disquieted him. If he loved her not, his self-love was hurt. Oswald in the presence of Corinna was more infatuated than happy, and the admiration with which she inspired him augmented his love, without calming the fervour of his mind. He beheld her as an astonishing phenomenon, whom every day presented some new ground for admiration, but these exquisite sensations, which she caused him to suffer, seemed to cloign the hope of a tranquil and happy life. Corinna, notwithstanding, was a woman of the most elegant manners, and possessed a mind easily contented. She was loved for her ordinary qualifications in life, independant of those more brilliant and exalted ones with which she was so eminently gifted; and of these, though she

united the possession of various talents, yet she was remarkable for her unrivalled superiority in each. Lord Nelvil, though himself advantageously gifted, imagined himself not equal to her in these respects, and this idea inspired him with additional apprehensions as to the permanence of their mutual affection. In vain, Corinna, by the force of love, made him her slave: some disqualifying consideration perpetually intervened,—so that the triumph of this queen of hearts was far from being complete.

Sometimes before the hour of exhibition, Lord Nelvil conducted Corinna to the palace of the Princess of Castel-Forte, where it was ultimately fixed the representation should take place, and a temporary theatre was prepared. The sun, at the time, shone with uncommon brightness, and the palace commanded views of Rome, and a great range of the surrounding country. Oswald stopped Corinna

for a moment, and said—"You see this glorious weather ; it is caused for you, and to illumine your success." " Ah !" answered Corinna, " if it be so, it is you who bring to me such happiness—It is to you, that I owe the protection of heaven." " These sentiments, pure and soothing, which the gay face of nature inspires,—are they sufficient to constitute your happiness ?" rejoined Oswald ; " or is it no other than this air which we respire, than these views of the country which we behold ; but in the brilliant hall, whither we proceed, where your name will be so loudly applauded ?" — " Oswald, these applauses," answered Corinna, " if I should obtain them, it is not in the point of view you seem to think that I shall prize them : If I should display some talent, will it not be my sentiment for you that inspires them ? Poetry, love, religion, all that elevates to enthusiasm, is in harmony with nature ; and, in regarding yon azure heaven, in yielding to

those impressions which it excites in me, I feel more decisively the sentiments of Juliet—I am more worthy of Romeo!” —“ Yes, celestial creature ! you *are* worthy of him !” exclaimed Lord Nelvil—“ yes, it is a weakness of soul that causes a jealousy of your talents, that creates the wish to live alone with thee in the whole universe.—Go, receive the homage of the world !—Go—but recollect that the considerations of Love, which are more divine than even your own genius, directs you but to Me !”—They then separated, and Lord Nelvil proceeded to the hall, in the pleasing expectation of again shortly beholding Corinna.

. Romeo and Juliet was founded on an Italian story ; the scene is laid in Verona, where, to this moment, they actually shew the tomb of those ill-fated lovers. Shakespear has written the piece with that kind of imagination peculiar to southern

nations, at once so impassioned and so versatile; that imagination, which triumphs in success, yet passes so suddenly from that good fortune to despair—from desperation to death itself. Every thing in that work is rapid in the impression, but nevertheless it is felt that those impressions should be indelible. It is the energies of nature, and not the frivolity of the heart, which, under a powerful climate, accelerate the developement of the passions. The soil is not light, although the vegetation be prompt; and Shakespear, better than any other foreign writer, has grasped the national character of Italy; and that fertility of imagination which suggests a thousand modes for the expression of the same sentiment; that Oriental eloquence, which presses into its service all the imagery of nature to describe what passes in the heart. It is not, as in the productions of Ossian, the same shade of character, the same sound, which uniformly responds to the

most obvious passion of the heart ; but the multifarious colours which Shakespear employs in Romeo and Juliet give not to his style a cold, studied affectation—it is a *ray divine*, reflected and varied, which produce these colours, which are warmed and illumined by that fire from whence they proceed.. There exists in this composition a lively vein, a brilliancy of expression, which duly characterise the country and its inhabitants. The play of Romeo and Juliet, translated into Italian, seems but to revert to its mother tongue.

The first occasion of Juliet's appearance, is at a ball, where Romeo Montague is introduced himself into the mansion of the Capulets, the mortal enemies of his own family. Corinna was charmingly dressed for the occasion ; at the same time, the costume of the period was not forgotten. Her hair was exquisitely disposed, and decorated with jewels

and artificial flowers. Her appearance was novel and interesting ; but her voice and figure were immediately recognized : the latter was remarkable, at the same time, for its chaste, elegant, and classic expressions. A burst of universal applause from the hall accompanied her first appearance. The regards of Corinna were directed towards Oswald, on whom, for a moment, they were fixed. A spark of joy, an expression of soothing and lively hope, illumed her countenance the while. Beholding her, the heart beat alike with pleasure and with fear—they felt that so much felicity could not long exist upon earth. Was it for Juliet or for Corinna, that such a presentiment was entertained ? When Romeo approaches, in order to address her in an under tone,—in the verses so brilliant and striking in the English, but so magnificent in the Italian version, the spectators, affected by the admirable style and language, warmly unite in applauding Romeo, and the sudden pas-

sion which possesses him—a passion inspired by the first sight—appeared to the greater part of them to be actually felt. At this moment, Oswald began to be alarmed—it appeared to him that all the spectators were about to rise, and to proclaim, with one voice, that Corinna was an angel among women. He was seriously alarmed ; he interrogated himself as to the real effect of what he had just seen—his suggestions were not satisfactory—a cloud appeared to pass before his eyes—he thought himself deprived of sight—he was doubtful of his existence—he retired behind a column for some moments to recover himself. Corinna was herself uneasy, her eyes searched for him anxiously, and she pronounced this line——

“ Too early seen unknown, and known too late,”

With a cadence so deep, so affecting, as thrilled Oswald while he heard it, because

he thought Corinna had applied it to their very peculiar situation.

He could not refrain from admiring the grace and expression of her gesture ; the dignity of her motions — a face which expressed an unutterable language, and portrayed those mysteries of the heart of which no description could be attempted. The accents—the looks—the least gesticulation of an actor truly affected, really inspired, is a continued exposition of the human heart, and a felicitous portraiture of the fine arts, blending with the spontaneous emotions of nature. The harmony of verse, and the fascination of gesture and attitude, lends to passion that which it is often destitute of—grace and dignity. Thus all the sentiments of the heart, and the emotions of the soul, are depicted to the imagination in their true and genuine colours.

In the second act, Juliet appears at a balcony in the garden, for the purpose of an interview with Romeo. Of all her original finery, nothing remained now in Corinna's dress but the flowers; the theatre was but faintly illumined, as the scene represented was by night; the face of Corinna, from the peculiarity of the light, seemed remarkably soft and affecting. The tones of her voice were still more exquisite than in the gay bustle of the fête. Her hand, elevated towards the empyrean—she seemed to invoke the stars as the sole witnesses worthy to be appealed to, and when she reiterated the name—Romeo! Romeo!—Although Oswald was certain that she contemplated him, he felt jealous even of those delicious accents, because they sounded the name of another! Oswald unconsciously placed himself in front of the balcony, while the person who played Romeo was somewhat obscured: the

whole attention of Corinna was evidently directed towards Oswald, when she pronounced those beautiful and affecting words :——

“ In truth, fair Montague, I am too fond ;
And therefore thou mayst think my ’haviour light:
But trust me, Gentleman, I’ll prove more true,
Than those that have more cunning to be strange.

* * * * *

therefore, pardon me :”

At this word — “ pardon me !” — pardon me for loving — pardon me for disclosing it — the countenance and manner of Corinna displayed something so tender, so plaintive, at the same time so flattering to her lover, in the manifest pride she felt in the object of her passion, particularly when she uttered the words “ fair Montague !” that Oswald himself felt enthusiastically proud in the conviction of her love. He raised his head, which till then inclined downwards, and felt elate, as if, in idea, the monarch of

the world, because he reigned in a heart, which included every thing dear and estimable in life.

Corinna, perceiving the effect which she produced on Oswald, was so much animated by a sympathetic emotion, as to perform miracles: and when, at the approach of day, Juliet imagines she hears the lark, the signal for the departure of Romeo, the accents of Corinna, assumed a preternatural charm; they expressed the passion of love with the most delicate exactness, blended at the same time with somewhat of a religious feeling and sentiment, recollections of heaven—a presentiment that she should speedily return there—a celestial sadness, such as that of a soul exiled to the earth, and conscious that it would ere long be recalled to its celestial mansions. Ah! how blessed was Corinna, in the moments when she could thus, in the presence of the object of her choice, enact such

an interesting, such an exalted part in so fine, so affecting a tragedy: What have years, nay, what have lives to compare with the enjoyments of a day like this?

If Lord Nelvil could have actually played Romeo; to the Juliet of Corinna, her satisfaction, her pleasure, would not have been so complete. She possibly might have felt desirous to supersede the language of one of the greatest poets, in order to express, in her own words, the feelings of her own heart. Perhaps a resistless sentiment of timid delicacy might have fettered the exertion of her talents, and she would not have ventured to gaze directly on Oswald, lest she might betray the real state of her affections; in a word, the effect of real feeling may reach to such a degree, as to destroy the principle of the assumed representation. But the consciousness that she displayed her fine powers in the presence of the

real object of her love, was indescribably grateful: she could then feel those enthusiastic emotions, which poetry alone can inspire. She felt all the charm of those emotions in their most felicitous effect, without the least drawback upon her feelings of delicacy, from the supposition that those who beheld her knew them to be real: when the affections which she so exquisitely pourtrayed, could not be thought to emanate from herself, when she seemed to say to Lord Nelvil—"Behold, how I can feel the passion of love!"

It is impossible that in a case of real passion, and in the presence of the beloved object, one can feel so perfectly happy in these respects: the feelings, and the accompanying affected reserve by turns impel or withhold the language and sentiments of the heart; too great a degree of conciliation, or of unneces-

sary coolness, is alternately displayed. But the opportunity of giving full scope to the feelings, without the least necessity for an affected reserve, gives that calm to the fervour of sensibility, which the expediencies of actual life too often destroy. In such a moment, the heart indulges in the most soothing reflections, and such did Corinna enjoy while representing Juliet. To this pleasure she united that resulting from her unbounded success, and the reiterated applauses which she received, and which was inexpressibly enhanced by the consideration of the whole passing in the presence of Oswald—at the feet of that object whose individual suffrage was more dear, more estimable to her, than all this accumulated admiration. Ah! in that moment, at least, Corinna felt real happiness: such a moment, she found, at the price of her own repose, that exquisite delight of the soul, which till then she had vainly wished for, but

which she should always have regretted.

Juliet, in the third act, becomes secretly the wife of Romeo. In the fourth, her parents are determined to compel her to marry another, but she resolves to take a somniferous draught, prepared and given to her by the friar, and which for a certain time, renders her apparently dead. All the action of Corinna, her agitated step, her altered accents, her looks now expressive of cordial hope, now of cheerless despair, exquisitely portrayed the afflicting passions of fear and love: as well as those terrific sensations which haunted her at the idea of being shut up alive in the vault of her ancestors, and above all, that enthusiastic passion which finally triumphed over such potent obstacles. Oswald could scarcely resist the impulse he felt, to fly to her assistance. At one moment, her eyes were raised towards heaven,

with a peculiar ardour which seemed to implore the divine protection; a feeling which no human being, in moments of perilous and awful suspense, can entirely divest himself of. At another time, Lord Nelvil was struck with the idea that she extended her arms towards him, in order to implore his assistance: actuated by a sudden impulse—he rose, but, immediately restored to his self-possession by the looks of astonishment of those who were near him, he again sat down: his emotions, however, were so strong, as to be generally noticed.

In the fifth act, Romeo, who supposes Juliet dead, enters the vault before the period of her waking, and presses the apparently lifeless body of his mistress to his bosom. Corinna was habited in white, her black hair dishevelled, her head falling on the shoulder of Romeo, as if really destitute of life, and though

the contour was gloomy and affecting, yet still the action was graceful. This scene suddenly inspired Oswald with conflicting passions. He could not bear to see Corinna in the arms of another. He shuddered while contemplating the image of her he loved, apparently deprived of life: in short, he suffered with Romeo himself, this heart-rending mixture of despair and love, of death, and extatic pleasure, which renders this scene the most arduous and affecting of any exhibited on a theatre. At length, when Juliet rises from the tomb, at the foot of which her lover has just sacrificed himself, her first words on quitting her temporary coffin in the midst of a gloomy vault, are not inspired by the terrific nature of her situation. She exclaims——

“Where is my lord? Where is my Romeo?” Lord Nelvil was so affected, that he groaned convulsively, and did

not feel himself at his ease, until after Mr. Edgermond carried him out of the hall.

When the piece was finished, Corinna found herself exhausted from the unusual exertions she had made. She retired—Oswald was the first to enter her apartment ; some ladies accompanied her. She still wore the costume of Juliet on the bier ; and, being very faint, was supported by her friends. In the excess of his agitation, he was incapable of distinguishing whether she only still appeared, or was really dead ; and, throwing himself at the feet of Corinna, he exclaimed in English, these words of Romeo :——

“ Eyes look your last ! arms, take your last embrace ! ”

on which, Corinna, who was still disordered—cried, great God ! What do you say ? Do you wish to leave me—do you

wish——” “No! No!” instantly exclaimed Oswald: No--I swear——”

At that moment, a number of the friends and admirers of Corinna, eager to see her, entered the room. She still gazed on Oswald, waiting with anxiety for what he was about to add; but they had no opportunity of speaking further that evening—they were not left by themselves one moment.

Never did the representation of any tragedy produce such an effect in Italy. The Romans were lavish in their praises of the translated piece, as well as of the incomparable actress. They asserted it was the tragedy that best suited the Italians, and formed the truest picture of their manners: it affected their hearts, and captivated their imaginations; and even ameliorated their fine language by a style alternately eloquent and lyric, natural and inspired! Corinna received all these eulogiums with an air of up-

-affected pleasure and satisfaction ; but her inmost soul was principally affected by the words "*I swear*"—as Oswald had pronounced them, and of which the arrival of the mixed company had interrupted the sequel: this word *swear* might, perhaps, contain the secret of her destiny !

END OF VOLUME THE FIRST.

NOTES.

Page 32, line 6.

(1) Ancona is nearly as destitute in this respect as it was then.

Page 50, line 4.

(2) This reflection is extracted from a letter written on Rome by M. de Humboldt, the brother of the celebrated traveller, and the Prussian Minister at Rome. It is not, perhaps, easy to find any where a man whose conversation and writings display more knowledge and talents.

Page 90, line 9.

(3) We must except from this censure on the Italian mode of declamation, the celebrated Monti, who recites verses as he writes them. It is one of the greatest pleasures to hear him recite the episode of Ugolini, Francesco de Rimini, the Death of Clorinda, &c.

Page 94. line 9.

(4) It should seem that Lord Nelvil alluded to that beautiful distich of Propertius,

Ut caput in magnis ubi non est ponere signis,
Ponitur hic imos ante corona pedes.

Page 160, line 7.

(5) A Frenchman, who, during the last war, commanded the Castle of St. Angelo; when summoned by the Neapolitan troops to capitulate, replied that he would surrender when the angel of bronze should sheathe his sword.

Page 160, line 17.

(6) These facts are found in the "History of the Italian Republics of the Middle Ages," by M. Simonde, a citizen of Geneva. This history must certainly be considered as sufficient authority; for we see, in perusing it, that its author possesses profound sagacity, and is equally accurate in his relation of facts, as energetical in his mode of detailing them.

Page 162, line 7.

(7) Eine Welt zwar bist du, o Rom; doch ohne die
Siebe
Ware die Welt nicht die Welt, ware den Rom auch
nicht Rom.

The two verses are from the pen of Goethe, the German poet, who is at the same time a philosopher and a man of letters, and not less conspicuous by his originality than imagination.

Page 169, line 21.

(8) It is said that the church of St. Peter was one of the principal causes of the reformation, because it cost the popes so much money, that in order to defray the expenses of building it, they multiplied indulgences.

Page 180, line 14.

(9) Mineralogists affirm that these lions are not of basalt, because the volcanic stone, known at present under this name, does not exist in Egypt; but since Pliny terms the Egyptian stone basalt, of which these lions are formed, and since the historian of the arts, Winkelman, gives it also this designation, I have thought it necessary to employ it in its original acceptation.

Page 184, line 1.

(10) *Carpite nunc tauri, de septem collibus herbas,
Dum licet. Hic magnæ jam locus urbis erit.*

Hoc quodcunque vides, hospes, quam maxima Roma
est,

Ante Phrygem Aenean collis et herba fuit, &c.

PROPER. lib. iv. el. f.

Page 201, line 12.

(12) Augustus died at Nola, as he was proceeding to the waters of Brundisium, which were prescribed for him, but he left Rome in a dying state.

Page 234, line 7.

(13) Viximus insignes inter utramque facem.

PROPER.

Page 243, line 5.

(14) Plin. Hist. Natur. lib. iii.—Tiberis —quamlibet magnorum navium ex Itulo mari capax, rerum in toto orbe nascentium mercator placidissimus, pluribus propè solus quam ceteri in omnibus terris amnes accolitur, aspiciturque villis. Nullique fluviorum minùs licet, inclusis utrinque lateribus: nec tamen ipse pugnat, quanquam creber ac subitis incrementis, nusquam magis aquis quàm in ipsâ urbe stagnantibus. Quin immò vates intelligitur potius ac monitor, auctu semper religiosus veriùs, quam sævus.

Page 311, line 15.

(16) Roscoe, author of the History of the Medici, has recently published a History of Leo X. which is a master-piece of its kind, and he relates therein all the testimonies of esteem and admiration which the

Italian princes and people have bestowed on distinguished literary characters; he also impartially shews that many Roman pontiffs have displayed, in this respect, a very liberal conduct.

Page 334, line 22.

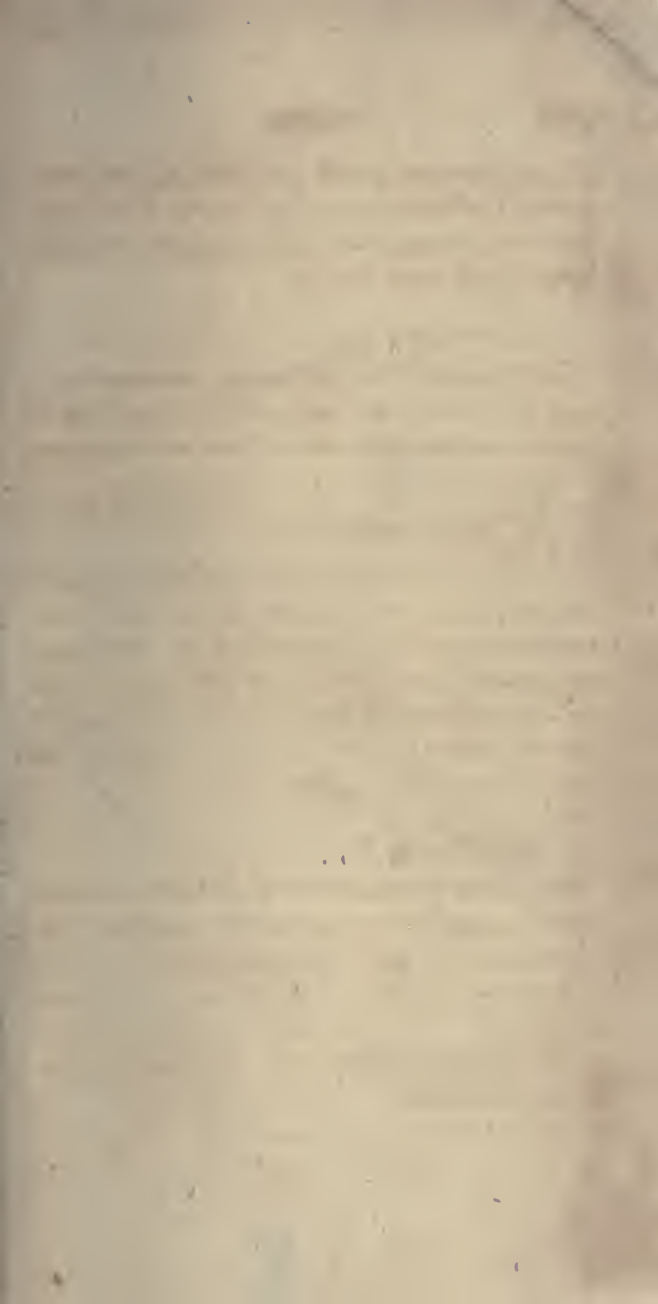
(17) Cesarotti, Verri, and Bettinelli, are three living authors, who have written in Italian prose, but it must be confessed that this has been for a long time unusual.

Page 359, line 6.

(18) Giovanni Pindemonte has recently published a collection of plays, the subjects of which are taken from Italian history: an undertaking very interesting and praise-worthy. The name of Pindemonte is also rendered illustrious by Hipolito Pindemonte one of the present poets of Italy, in whom are combined the greatest harmony and beauty.

Page 363, line 8.

(19) In the posthumous works of Alfieri are found many excellent pieces; but we may conclude, from a dramatic essay which he wrote respecting his tragedy of Abel, that even in his own opinion his pieces were too severe, and that it was necessary, in order to produce stage effect, to yield more to the pleasures of the imagination.





PLEASE DO NOT REMOVE
CARDS OR SLIPS FROM THIS POCKET

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO LIBRARY

PQ
2431
C713
1807
v.1

Stael-Holstein, Anne Louise
Germaine
(Necker) baronne de
Corinna; or, Italy

